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HARD CASH BY CHARLES READE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

HARD CASH.

A MATTER-OF-FACT ROMANCE.

BY

CHARLES READE.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

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HARD CASH.

CHAPTER I.

Dr. Short arrived, approved Dr. Phillips's treatment, and said the case was severe but not hopeless, and he would call again. A bed was prepared in the house for Mr. Hardie: but neither he nor any of the Dodds closed an eye that sorrowful night.

About midnight, after a short slumber, the sufferer became uneasy, and begged to be left with Julia. Julia was sent for, and found her a good deal excited. She inquired more than once if they were quite alone, and then asked for paper and a pencil. She wrote a few lines, and made Julia put them in a cover and seal them. "Now dear friend," she said, "promise me not to open this, nor even to let your mother; it is not for your happiness that what I have written should be seen by her or you; no, no, much better not. Come; dear friend, pledge me your honour." Julia pledged her honour.

Then Jane wrote on the cover, "From a dying sister." Julia saw that; and wept sore.

Jane comforted her. "Do not weep for me, love: I am content to go, or stay. This is not my doing; so I know it must be for the best. He is leading me by a way that I know not. Oh my beloved friend,

how sweet it is to lie in His hands, and know no will but His. Ay, I thank Him for crossing my will, and leading me to Himself by His own good way, and not by poor blind, foolish, mine."

In this spirit of full resignation she abode constant, and consoled her weeping friends from time to time, whenever she was quiet herself.

About daybreak, being alone with her father, she shed a few tears at his lonely condition. "I fear you will miss me," said she. "Take my advice, dear; be reconciled with Alfred at once, and let Julia be your daughter, since I am leaving you. She is all humility and heart. Dying, I prize her and her affection more highly; I seem to see characters clearer, all things clearer, than I did before my summons came."

The miserable father tried to be playful and scold her: "You must not talk nor think of death," he said. "Your bridal-day is to come first; I know all; Edward Dodd has told me he loves you. He is a fine noble fellow; you shall marry him: I wish it. Now, for his sake, summon all your resolution, and make up your mind to live. Why, at your age, it needs but to say, 'I will live, I will, I will;' and when all the prospect is so smiling, when love awaits you at the altar, and on every side! If you could leave your poor doting father, do not leave your lover: and here he is with his mother crying for you. Let me comfort him; let me tell him you will live for his sake and mine."

Even this could not disturb the dying Christian. "Dear Edward," she said; "it is sweet to know he loves me. Ah, well, he is young; he must live without me till I become but a tender memory of his youth. And oh, I pray for him that he may cherish the words

I have spoken to him for his soul's good far longer than he can remember these features that are hastening to decay."

At ten in the morning Mr. Hardie's messenger returned without Alfred, and with a note from Dr. Wycherley to this effect, that, the order for Alfred's admission into his asylum being signed by Mr. Thomas Hardie, he could not send him out even for a day except on Thomas Hardie's authority; it would be a violation of the law. Under the circumstances, however, he thought he might venture to receive that order by telegraph. If then Mr. Hardie would telegraph Thomas Hardie in Yorkshire to telegraph him (Wycherley), Alfred should be sent with two keepers wherever Mr. T. Hardie should so direct.

Now Mr. Hardie had already repented of sending for Alfred at all. So, instead of telegraphing Yorkshire, he remained passive, and said sullenly to Mrs. Dodd, "Alfred can't come, it seems."

Thus Routine kept the brother from his dying sister.

They told Jane, with aching hearts, there was reason to fear Alfred could not arrive that day.

She only gave a meaning look at Julia, about the paper; and then she said with a little sigh, "God's will be done."

This was the last disappointment Heaven allowed Earth to inflict on her; and the shield of Faith turned its edge.

One hour of pain, another of delirium, and now the clouds that darken this mortal life seemed to part and pass, and Heaven to open full upon her. She spoke of her coming change no longer with resignation;

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softened towards the father by his bereavement, and their sight of his misery, and also by his grateful words, they quite acquitted him of having robbed them, and felt sure the fourteen thousand pounds was at the bottom of the sea.

They were a little surprised that Mr. Hardie never spoke nor wrote to them again; but being high minded and sweet tempered, they set it down to all-absorbing grief, and would not feel sore about it.

And now they must leave the little villa where they had been so happy, and so unhappy.

Their scanty furniture went first; Mrs. Dodd followed, and arranged it in their apartments. Julia would stay behind to comfort Edward, inconsolable herself. The auction came off. Most of the things went for cruelly little money compared to their value: and with the balance the sad young pair came up to London, and were clasped in their mother's arms. The tears were in her tender eyes. "It is a poor place to receive my treasures," she said: Edward looked round astonished; "It was a poor place," said he, "but you have made a little palace of it, somehow or another."

"My children's love can alone do that," replied Mrs. Dodd, kissing them both again.

Next day they consulted together how they were to live. Edward wished to try and get his father into a public asylum; then his mother would have a balance to live upon out of her income. But Mrs. Dodd rejected this proposal with astonishment. In vain Edward cited the 'Tiser that public asylums are patterns of comfort, and cure twice as many patients as the private ones do. She was deaf alike to the 'Tiser

and to statistics. "Do not argue me out of my common sense," said she. "My husband, your father, in a public asylum, where anybody can go and stare at my darling!"

She then informed them she had written to her Aunt Bazalgette and her Uncle Fountain, and invited them to contribute something towards David's maintenance.

Edward was almost angry at this. "Fancy asking favours of *them*," said he.

"Oh, I must not sacrifice my family to false pride," said Mrs. Dodd; "besides, they are entitled to know."

While waiting for their answers, a word about the parties, and their niece.

Our Mrs. Dodd, born Lucy Fountain, was left at nineteen to the care of two guardians: 1, her Uncle Fountain, an old bachelor, who loved comfort, pedigree, and his own way; 2, her Aunt Bazalgette, who loved flirting, dressing, and her own way; both charming people, when they got their own way; verjuice, when they didn't; and egotists deep as ocean.

From guardians they grew match-makers and rivals by proxy: Uncle schemed to graft Lucy on to a stick called Talboys, that came in with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, known in pedigrees as "the Norman Conquest." Aunt, wife of a merchant of no Descent, except from a high stool, devoted her to Richard Hardie. An unlooked-for obstacle encountered both: Lucy was not amorous. She loved these two egotists, and their quadrupeds; but there she stopped dead short. They persisted; and, while they pulled her to and fro and ruffled her native calm, David Dodd, first mate of the Something or other, East Indiaman — brown cheek,

honest speech, heart of gold — fell deep in love and worshipped her at a distance. His timidity and social insignificance made him harmless; so egotist Fountain had him in to dessert to spin yarns; egotist Bazalgette invited him to her house to flirt with. At this latter place he found Hardie and Talboys both courting Lucy; this drove him mad, and in his fury he popped. Lucy declined him secundum artem: he went away blessing her, with a manly sob or two. Lucy cried a little and took a feminine spite against his rivals, who remained to pester her. Now Talboys, spurred by uncle, had often all but popped; only some let, hindrance, or just impediment had still interposed: once her pony kept prancing at each effort he made towards Hymen; they do say the subtle virgin kept probing the brute with a hair pin, and made him caracole and spill the treacle as fast as it came her way. However, now Talboys elected to pop by sea. It was the element his ancestors had invaded fair England by; and on its tranquil bosom a lover is safe from prancing steeds, and the myriad anti-pops of terra firma. Miss Lucy consented to the water excursion demurely, designing to bring her sickly woer to the point and so get rid of him for ever and ever. Plot and counter-plot were baffled by the elements: there came an anti-pop out of the south-west called a gale. Talboys boated so skilfully that he and his intended would have been united without ceremony by Father Nep. at the bottom of the British Channel, but for David Dodd, who was hovering near in jealous anguish and a cutter. He saved them both, but in the doing of it missed his ship, and professional ruin faced him. Then good-hearted Lucy was miserable, and appealed to Mr. Bazalgette, and

he managed somehow to get David made captain of the Rajah. The poor girl thought she had squared the account with David; but he refused the ship unless she would go halves, and while her egotists bullied and vexed her, he wrought so upon her pity, and teased her so, that to get rid of his importunity she married him. In time she learned to love him ten times better than if she had begun all flames. Uncle and aunt cut her tolerably dead for some years; Uncle came round the first; some antiquarian showed him that Dodd was a much more ancient family than Talboys. "Why, sir, they were lords of sixteen manors under the Heptarchy, and hold some of them to this day." Mrs. Bazalgette, too, had long corresponded with her periodically, and on friendly terms.

The answers came on the same day, curiously enough. Uncle Fountain, ruined by railway speculation, was living on an allowance from creditors; but his house was at their service if they liked to live with him — and board themselves.

Mrs. Bazalgette's was the letter of a smooth woman, who has hoarded imperishable spite. She reminded her niece after all these years, that her marriage with David was an act of disobedience and ingratitude. She then enumerated her own heavy expenses, all but the 400*l.* a year she spent in bedizening her carcase, and finally, amidst a multitude of petty insults, she offered to relieve Mrs. Dodd of — — Julia. Now Poetry has reconciled us to an asp in a basket of figs; but here was a scorpion in a bundle of nettles. Poor Mrs. Dodd could not speak after reading it. She handed it to Edward, and laid her white forehead

wearily in her hand. Edward put the letter in an envelope, and sent it back with a line in his own hand declining all correspondence with the writer.

"Now then, dears," said he, "don't be cast down. Let this be a warning to us, never to ask favours of anybody. Let us look the thing in the face; we must work or starve: and all the better for us. Hard work suits heavy hearts. Come, have you any plan?"

"To be sure we have," said Julia eagerly. "I mean to go for a governess, and then I shall cost mamma nothing, and besides I can send her the money the people give me."

"A pretty plan!" said Edward sadly; "what! we three part company? Don't you feel lonely enough without that? I do, then. How can we bear our burdens at all, if we are not to be all together to cheer one another along the weary road? What, are we to break up? Is it not enough to be bereaved?"

He could say no more for the emotion his own words caused him; he broke down altogether, and ran out of the room.

However, he came back in an hour with his eyes red, but his heart indomitable; determined to play a man's part for all their sakes. "You ladies," said he, with something of his old genial way, that sounded so strange to one looking at his red eyes, and inspired a desire to hug him, "are full of talent, but empty of invention. The moment you are ruined, or that sort of thing, it is *go* for a governess, *go* for a companion, *go* here, *go* there, in search of what? Independence? No; Dependence. Besides, all this *going* is bosh. Families are strong if they stick together, and if they go to pieces they are weak. I learned one bit of sense

out of that mass of folly they call antiquity; and that was the story of the old bloke with his twelve sons, and fagot to match. 'Break 'em apart,' he said; and each son broke his stick as easy as shelling peas. 'Now break the twelve all tied together:' devil a bit could the duffers break it then. Now we are not twelve, we are but three; easy to break one or two of us apart, but not the lot together. No: nothing but death shall break this fagot, for nothing less shall part us three."

He stood like a Colossus, and held out his hands to them; they clung round his neck in a moment, as if to illustrate his words; clung tight, and blessed him for standing so firm and forbidding them to part.

Mrs. Dodd sighed, after the first burst of enthusiastic affection, and said: "If he would only go a step further and tell us what to do in company."

"Ay, there it is," said Julia. "Begin with me. What can I do?"

"Why, paint."

"What, to sell? Oh dear, my daubs are not good enough for that."

"Stuff! Nothing is too bad to *sell.*

"I really think you might," said Mrs. Dodd; "and I will help you."

"No, no, mamma, I want you for something better than the fine arts. You must go in one of the great grooves: Female vanity: you must be a dressmaker; you are a genius at it."

"My mamma dressmaker," cried Julia: "oh, Edward, how can you? how dare you? poor, poor mamma!"

"Don't be so impetuous, dear. I think he is right:

yes, it is all I am fit for. If ever there was a Heaven-born dressmaker, it's me."

"As for myself," said Edward, "I shall look out for some business in which physical strength goes further than intellectual attainments. Luckily there are plenty such. Breaking stones is one. But I shall try a few others first."

It is easy to settle on a business, hard to get a footing in one. Edward, convinced that the dress-making was their best card, searched that mine of various knowledge, the 'Tiser, for an opening: but none came. At last one of those great miscellaneous houses in the City advertised for a lady to cut cloaks. He proposed to his mother to go with him. She shrank from encountering strangers. No, she would go to a fashionable dressmaker she had employed some years, and ask her advice. Perhaps Madame Blanch would find her something to do. "I have more faith in the 'Tiser," said Edward, clinging to his idol.

Mrs. Dodd found Madame Blanch occupied in trying to suit one of those heart-breaking idiots, to whom dress is the one great thing, and all things else, sin included, the little ones. She had tried on a scarf three times; and it discontented her when on, and spoilt all else when off. Mrs Dodd saw, and said obligingly, "Perhaps were I to put it on you could judge better." Mrs. Dodd, you must know, had an admirable art of putting on a shawl or scarf. With apparent nonchalance she settled the scarf on her shapely shoulders so happily, that the fish bit, and the scarf went into its carriage; forty guineas, or so. Madame cast a rapid but ardent glance of gratitude Dodd-wards. The customer began to go, and after fidgeting

to the door and back for twenty minutes actually went somehow. Then madame turned round, and said, "I'm sure, ma'am, I am much obliged to you; you sold me that scarf: and it is a pity we couldn't put her on your bust and shoulders, ma'am, then perhaps a scarf might please her. What can I do for you, ma'am?"

Mrs. Dodd blushed, and with subdued agitation told Madame Blanch that this time she was come not to purchase but to ask a favour. Misfortune was heavy on her; and, though not penniless, she was so reduced by her husband's illness and the loss of 14,000*l.* by shipwreck, that she must employ what little talents she had to support her family.

The woman explored her from head to foot to find the change of fortune in some corner of her raiment: but her customer was as well, though plainly, dressed as ever, and still looked an easy-going duchess.

"Could Madame Blanch find her employment in her own line? What talent I have," said Mrs. Dodd humbly, "lies in that way. I could not cut as well as yourself, of course; but I think I can as well as some of your people."

"That I'll be bound you can," said Madame Blanch drily. "But dear, dear, to think of your having come down so. Have a glass of wine to cheer you a bit; do now, that is a good soul."

"Oh no, madam. I thank you; but wine cannot cheer me; a little bit of good news to take back to my anxious children, that would cheer me, madam. *Will* you be so good?"

The dressmaker coloured and hesitated; she felt the fascination of Dignity donning Humility, and speaking Music: but she resisted. "It won't do, at

least here. I shouldn't be mistress in my own place. I couldn't drive you like I'm forced to do the rest; and, then, I should be sure to favour you, being a real lady, which is my taste, and you always will be, rich or poor; and then all my ladies would be on the bile with jealousy."

"Ah, madam," sighed Mrs. Dodd, "you treat me like a child; you give me sweetmeats, and refuse me food for my family."

"No no," said the woman hastily, "I don't say I mightn't send you out some work to do at home."

"Oh, thank you, madam." N.B. The dressmaker had dropped the Madam, so the lady used it now at every word.

"Now stop a bit," said Madam Blanch. "I know a firm that's in want. Theirs is easy work by mine, and they cut up a piece of stuff every two or three days." She then wrote on one of her own cards, Messrs. Cross, Fitchett, Copland, and Tylee, 11, 12, 13, and 14, Primrose Lane, City. "Say I recommend you. To tell the truth, an old hand of my own was to come here this very morning about it, but she hasn't kept her time; so this will learn her business doesn't stand still for lie-a-beds to catch it."

Mrs. Dodd put the card in her bosom and pressed the hand extended to her by Madame Zaire Blanch; whose name was Sally White, spinster. She went back to her children and showed them the card, and sank gracefully into a chair, exhausted as much by the agitation of asking favours as by the walk. "Cross, Fitchett, Copland? Why they were in the 'Tiser yesterday," said Edward: "look at this; a day lost by being wiser than the 'Tiser."

"I'll waste no more then," said Mrs. Dodd, rising quietly from the chair. They begged her to rest herself first. No, she would not. "I saw this lost by half an hour," said she. "Succeed or fail, I will have no remissness to reproach myself with." And she glided off in her quiet way, to encounter Cross, Fitchett, Copland, and Tylee, in the lane where a primrose was caught growing — six hundred years ago. She declined Edward's company rather peremptorily. "Stay and comfort your sister," said she. But that was a blind; the truth was, she could not bear her children to mingle in what she was doing. No, her ambition was to ply the scissors and thimble vigorously, and so enable them to be ladies and gentlemen at large. She being gone, Julia made a parcel of water-colour drawings, and sallied forth all on fire to sell them. But, while she was dressing, Edward started on a cruise in search of employment. He failed entirely. They met in the evening, Mrs. Dodd resigned, Edward dogged, Julia rather excited. "Now let us tell our adventures," she said. "As for me, shop after shop declined my poor sketches. They all wanted something about as good, only a little different: nobody complained of the grand fault, and that is their utter badness. At last one old gentleman examined them, and oh! he was so fat; there, round. And he twisted his mouth *so*" (imitating him) "and squinted into them *so:* then I was full of hope; and said to myself, 'Dear mamma and Edward!' And so, when he ended by saying 'No,' like all the rest, I burst out crying like a goose."

"My poor girl," cried Mrs. Dodd, with the tears in

her own eyes, "why expose yourself to these cruel rebuffs?"

"Oh, don't waste your pity, mamma; those great babyish tears were a happy thought of mine; he bought two directly to pacify me; and there's the money. Thirty shillings!" And she laid it proudly on the table.

"The old cheat," said Edward; "they were worth two guineas apiece, I know."

"Not they; or why would not anybody else give twopence for them?"

"Because pictures are a Drug."

He added that even talent was not saleable unless it got into the Great Grooves; and then looked at Mrs. Dodd; she replied that unfortunately those Grooves were not always accessible. The City firm had received her stiffly, and inquired for whom she had worked. "Children, my heart fell at that question. I was obliged to own myself an amateur and beg a trial. However, I gave Madame Blanch's card: but Mr. — I don't know which partner it was — said he was not acquainted with her: then he looked a little embarrassed, I thought, and said the Firm did not care to send its stuff to ladies not in the business; I might cut it to waste, or —— He said no more; but I do really think he meant I might purloin it."

"Why wasn't I there to look him into the earth? Oh, mamma, that you should be subjected to all this!"

"Be quiet, child; I had only to put on my armour; and do you know what my armour is? Thinking of my children. So I put on my armour, and said quietly, we were not so poor but we could pay for a piece of cloth should I be so unfortunate as to *spoil* it; and I

offered in plain terms to deposit the price as security. But he turned as stiff at that as his yard measure; 'that was not Cross and Co.'s way of doing business,' he said. But it is unreasonable to be dejected at a repulse or two: and I am not out of spirits; not much:" with this her gentle mouth smiled; and her patient eyes were moist.

The next day, just after breakfast, was announced a gentleman from the City. He made his bow and produced a parcel, which proved to be a pattern cloak. "Order, ladies," said he briskly, "from Cross, Fitchett, and Co., Primrose Lane. Porter outside with the piece. You can come in, sir." Porter entered with a bale. "Please sign this, ma'am." Mrs. Dodd signed a receipt for the stuff, with an undertaking to deliver it in cloaks at 11, Primrose Lane, in such a time. Porter retreated. The other said, "Our Mr. Fitchett wishes you to observe this fall in the pattern. It is new."

"I will, sir. Am I to trouble you with any money — by way of deposit, sir?"

"No orders about it, ma'am. Ladies, your most obedient. Good morning, sir."

And he was away.

All this seemed like a click or two of City clockwork: followed by rural silence. Yet in that minute commerce had walked in upon genteel poverty, and left honest labour and modest income behind her.

Great was the thankfulness, strange and new the excitement. Edward was employed to set up a very long deal table for his mother to work on, Julia to go and buy tailors' scissors. Calculations were made how to cut the stuff to advantage, and in due course the

heavy scissors were heard snick, snick, snicking all day long.

Julia painted zealously, and Edward, without saying a word to them, walked twenty miles a day hunting for a guinea a week; and finding it not. Not but what employment was often bobbed before his eyes: but there was no grasping it. At last he heard of a place peculiarly suited to him; a packing foreman's in a warehouse at Southwark; he went there, and was referred to Mr. A.'s private house. Mr. A. was in the country for a day. Try Mr. B. Mr. B. was dining with the Lord Mayor. Returning belated, he fell in with a fire; and, sad to say, life was in jeopardy: a little old man had run out at the first alarm, when there was no danger, and, as soon as the fire was hot, had run in again for his stockings, or some such treasure. Fire does put out some people's reason; clean. While he was rummaging madly, the staircase caught, and the smoke cut off his second exit, and drove him up to a little staircase window at the side of the house. Here he stood, hose in hand, scorching behind and screeching in front. A ladder had been brought: but it was a yard short: and the poor old man danced on the window-ledge and dare not come down to a gallant fireman who stood ready to receive him at great personal peril. In the midst of shrieks and cries and shouts of encouragement, Edward, a practised gymnast, saw a chance. He ran up the ladder like a cat, begged the fireman to clasp it tight; then got on his shoulders and managed to grasp the window-sill: he could always draw his own weight up by his hands: so he soon had his knee on the sill,

and presently stood erect. He then put his left arm inside the window, collared the old fellow with his right, and, half persuasion, half force, actually lowered him to the ladder with one Herculean arm amidst a roar that made the Borough ring; such a strain could not long be endured; but the fireman speedily relieved him by seizing the old fellow's feet and directing them on to the ladder, and so, propping him by the waist, went down before him, and landed him safe. Edward waited till they were down: then begged them to hold the ladder tight below; he hung from the ledge, got his eye well on the ladder below him, let himself quietly drop, and caught hold of it with hands of iron, and twisting round, came down the ladder on the inside hand over head without using his feet, a favourite gymnastic exercise of his learnt at the Modern Athens. He was warmly received by the crowd and by the firemen. "You should be one of us, sir," said a fine young fellow who had cheered him and advised him all through. "I wish to Heaven I was," said Edward: the other thought he was joking, but laughed and said, "Then you should talk to our head man after the business; there is a vacancy, you know."

Edward saw the fire out, and rode home on the engine. There he applied to the head man for the vacancy.

"You are a stranger to me, sir," said the head man. "And I'm sure it is no place for you; you are a gentleman."

"Well; is there anything ungentlemanly in saving people's lives and property?"

"Hear! hear!" said a comic fireman.

The compliment began to tell, though. Others put

in their word. "Why, Mr. Baldwin, if a gentleman ain't ashamed of us, why should we be ashamed of him?"

"Where will ye get a better?" asked another; and added, "He is no stranger; we've seen him work."

"Stop a bit," said the comic fireman: "what does the dog say? just call him, sir, if you please; his name is Charlie."

Edward called the fire-dog kindly; he came and fawned on him; then gravely snuffed him all round, and retired wagging his tail gently, as much as to say, "I was rather taken by surprise at first, but, on the whole, I see no reason to recal my judgment."

"It is all right," said the firemen in chorus; and one that had not yet spoken to Edward now whispered him mysteriously, "Ye see that there dog he knows more than we do."

After the dog, a biped oracle at head-quarters was communicated with, and late that very night Edward was actually enrolled a fireman; and went home warmer at heart than he had been for some time. They were all in bed; and, when he came down in the morning, Julia was reading out of the 'Tiser a spirited and magniloquent description of a fire in Southwark, and of the heroism displayed by a young gentleman unknown, but whose name the writer hoped at so much the line would never be allowed to pass into oblivion, and be forgotten. In short, the 'Tiser paid him in one column for years of devotion. Now Edward, of course, was going to relate his adventure; but the journal told it so gloriously, he hesitated to say, "I did all that."

He just sat and stared, and wondered, and blushed, and grinned like an imbecile.

Unfortunately looks seldom escaped the Doddesses. "What is that for?" inquired Julia, reproachfully. "Is that sheepish face the thing to wear, when a sister is reading out an heroic action? Ah, these are the things that make one long to be a man, to do them. What *are* you thinking about, dear?"

"Well, I am thinking the 'Tiser is pitching it rather strong."

"My love, what an expression!"

"Well, then, to be honest, I agree with you that it is a jolly thing to fight with fire and save men's lives; and I am glad you see it in that light; for now you will approve the step I have taken. Ladies, I have put myself in the way of doing this sort of thing every week of my life. I'm a fireman."

"You are jesting, I trust?" said Mrs. Dodd anxiously.

"No, mamma. I got the place late last night, and I'm to enter on my duties and put on the livery next Monday. Hurrah!"

Instantly the admirers of fiery heroes at a distance overflowed with grief and mortification at the prospect of one in their own family. They could not speak at all at first: and, when they did, it was only "Cruel! cruel!" from Julia; and "Our humiliation is now complete," from Mrs. Dodd.

They soon dashed Edward's spirits, and made him unhappy; but they could not convince him he had done wrong. However, in the heat of remonstrance, they let out at last that they had just begun to hope by dint of scissors and paint-brush to send him back

to Oxford. He also detected, under a cloud of tender, loving, soothing, coaxing, and equivocating, expressions, their idea of a Man: to wit, a tall, strong, ornamental creature, whom the women were to cocker up, and pet, and slave for; and be rewarded by basking, dead tired, in an imperial smile or two let fall by their sovereign protégé from his arm-chair. And, in fact, good women have often demoralised their idols down to the dirt by this process; to be sure their idols were sorryish clay, to begin.

Edward was anything but flowery, so he paraded no manly sentiments in reply; he just bluntly ridiculed the idea of his consenting to prey on them; and he said humbly, "I know I can't contribute as much to our living as you two can — the petticoats carry the brains in our family — but, be a burden to you? Not if I know it."

"Pride! pride! pride!" objected Julia, lifting her grand violet orbs like a pensive Madonna.

"And such pride! The pride that falls into a fire-bucket," suggested prosaic mamma.

"That is cutting," said Edward: "but, soyons de notre siècle; flunkeyism is on the decline. I'll give you something to put in both your pipes:

> Honour and rank from no condition rise.
> Act well thy part; in that the honour lies."

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Dodd, "only first choose your part: and let your choice be reasonable."

"Mine was Hobson's; who never chooses ill. Come, come," said he, and appealed calmly to their reason: by which means he made no impression at all. Then he happened to say, "Besides, I *must* do something; I own to you I am more cast down than I choose to

show. Mother, I feel like lead ever since she died." Now on this, their faces filled with sympathy directly. So encouraged he went on to say; "but when I got my hand on that old duffer's collar, and lowered him to the ladder, and the fire shot roaring out of the window after him, too late to eat him, and the crowd cheered the fireman and me, I did feel warm about the waistcoat, and, for the first time this ever so long, life seemed not quite ended; I felt there was a little bit of good left, that even a poor dunce like me could do, and she could approve; if she can look down and see me, as I hope she can."

"There, there," said Mrs. Dodd tearfully, "I am disarmed. But, my darling, I do not know what you are talking about: stay; why Edward, surely — I hope — you were not the young gentleman in the paper: the one that risked his life so nobly; so foolishly if it was you."

"Why, mother, didn't I tell you it was me?" said Edward colouring.

"No, that you did not," said Julia. "Was it? was it? oh do be quick and tell one. There, it was."

"Well it was: ah, I remember now; that splendiferous account shut me up. Oh I say, didn't the 'Tiser pitch it strong?"

"Not at all," cried Julia; "I believe every word, and ever so much more. Mamma, we have got a hero: and here he is at breakfast with us, like an ordinary mortal." She rose suddenly with a burst of her old fire and fell upon him, and kissed him, and said earnestly how proud she was of him: "and so is mamma; she may say what she likes."

"Proud of him! ah that I am; very proud: and

with the new curate; and who should it prove to be but Mr. Hurd? At sight of him she turned white and red, and the whole scene in the church came back to her. But Mr. Hurd showed considerable tact for so young a man; he spoke to her in accents of deep respect, but confined his remarks strictly to the matter in hand. She told her mother when she got home; and expressed her gratitude to Mr. Hurd, but said she wished they did not live in the same parish with him. This feeling, however, wore off by degrees, as her self-imposed duties brought her more and more into contact with him, and showed her his good qualities.

As for Mr. Hurd, he saw and understood her vivid emotion at sight of him; saw and pitied; not without wonder that so beautiful a creature should have been jilted. And from the first he marked his sense of Alfred's conduct by showing her a profound and chivalrous respect, which he did not bestow on other young ladies in his parish; on the contrary, he rather received homage from them than bestowed it. By-and-by he saw Julia suppress if not hide her own sorrow, and go sore-hearted day by day to comfort the poor and afflicted: he admired and almost venerated her for this. He called often on Mrs. Dodd, and was welcome. She concealed her address for the present from all her friends except Dr. Sampson; but Mr. Hurd had discovered her; and ladies do not snub the clergy. Moreover, Mr. Hurd was a gentleman, and inclined to High Church. This she liked. He was very good-looking too, and quiet in his manners. Above all, he seemed to be doing her daughter good; for Julia and Mr. Hurd had one great sentiment in

consent bade fair to become a barrier between her and Mrs. Dodd, hitherto her bosom friend as well as her mother. This was intolerable to poor Mrs. Dodd: and at last she said one day, "My darling, do not be afraid of me; rob me of your happy thoughts if you will, but oh, not of your sad ones."

Julia began to cry directly. "Oh no, mamma," she sobbed, "do not you encourage me in my folly. I know I have thrown away my affections on one who — I shall never see him again: shall I, mamma? Oh to think I can say those words, and yet go living on."

Mrs. Dodd sighed. And if you saw him, would that mend the chain he has chosen to break?"

"I don't know; but if I could only see him, to part friends! It is cruel to hate him now he has lost his sister; and then I have got her message to give him. And I want to ask him why he was afraid of me; why he could not tell me he had altered his mind; did he think I wanted to have him against his will? Oh, mamma," said she imploringly, "he *seemed* to love me; he *seemed* all truth. I am a poor unfortunate girl."

Mrs. Dodd had only caresses to soothe her with. She could not hold out any hopes.

One day Julia asked her timidly if she might be a district visitor: "My dear friend was: and advised me to be one too; but I was wilful in those days and chose to visit by fits and starts, and be independent. I am humbled now a little: may I, mamma? Since she died every word of hers seems a law to me."

Mrs. Dodd assented cordially; as she would to anything else her wounded one had proposed.

This project brought Julia into communication

very unhappy. Heroes are my horror. How often, and how earnestly have I prayed that my son might not be brave like his father; but stay quietly at home out of harm's way."

Here remonstrance ended: the members of this family, happy by nature, though unhappy by accident, all knew when to yield to each other.

Unfortunately, in proportion as all these excitements great and small died, and her life became quiet and uniform, the depth of Julia's wound showed itself more and more. She never sang nor hummed, as she used to do, going about the house. She never laughed. She did burst out with fervid sentiments now and then; but very rarely; on the whole a pensive languor took the place of her lovely impetuosity. Tears rushed in a moment to her eyes with no visible cause. She often stole to the window, and looked all up and down the street: and, when she was out of doors, she looked down every side-street she passed; and sometimes, when a quick light step came behind them, or she saw a tall young gentleman at a great distance, her hand twitched her mother's arm or trembled on it. And, always, when they came home, she lingered a moment at the door-step and looked all round before she went in.

At all these signs one half of Mrs. Dodd's heart used to boil with indignation, and the other half melt with pity. For she saw her daughter was looking for "the Wretch." Indeed Mrs. Dodd began to fear she had done unwisely in ignoring "the Wretch;" Julia's thoughts dwelt on him none the less; indeed all the more as it seemed: so the topic interdicted by tacit

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common. When the intimacy had continued some time on these easy terms, Mrs. Dodd saw that Mr. Hurd was falling in love with Julia, and that sort of love, warm, but respectful, which soon leads to marriage, especially when the lover is a clergyman. This was more than Mrs. Dodd bargained for; she did not want to part with her daughter, and under other circumstances, would have drawn in her horns. But Mr. Hurd's undisguised homage gratified her maternal heart, coming so soon after great insult to her daughter; and then she said to herself, "At any rate he will help me cure her of 'the Wretch.'" She was not easy in her mind, though; could not tell what would come of it all. So she watched her daughter's pensive face as only mothers watch; and saw a little of the old peach bloom creeping back.

That was irresistible: she let things go their own way, and hoped for the best.

CHAPTER II.

The tenacity of a private lunatic asylum is unique. A little push behind your back and you slide into one; but to get out again is to scale a precipice with crumbling sides. Alfred, luckier than many, had twice nearly escaped: yet now he was tighter in than ever. His father at first meant to give him but a year or two of it, and let him out on terms, his spirit broken, and Julia married. But his sister's death was fatal to him. By Mrs. Hardie's settlement the portion of any child of hers dying a minor, or intestate and

childless, was to go to the other children; so now the prisoner had inherited his sister's ten thousand pounds, and a good slice of his bereaved enemy's and father's income. But this doubled his father's bitterness, — that he, the unloved one, should be enriched by the death of the adored one! — and also tempted his cupidity: and unfortunately shallow legislation conspired with that temptation. For, when an Englishman, sane or insane, is once pushed behind his back into a madhouse, those relatives who have hidden him from the public eye, i.e. from the eye of justice, can grab hold of his money behind his back, as they certified away his wits behind his back, and can administer it in the dark, and embezzle it, chanting "But for us the 'dear deranged' would waste it." Nor do the monstrous enactments, which confer this unconstitutional power on subjects, and shield its exercise from the light and safeguard of Publicity, affix any penalty to the abuse of that power, if by one chance in a thousand detected. In Lunacy Law extremes of intellect meet; the British senator plays at Satan; and tempts human frailty and cupidity beyond what they are able to bear.

So behold a son at twenty-one years of age devoted by a father to imprisonment for life. But stop a minute; the mad statutes, which by the threefold temptation of Facility, Obscurity, and Impunity, ensure the occasional incarceration and frequent detention of sane but moneyed men, do provide, though feebly, for their bare liberation, provided they don't yield to the genius loci, and the natural effect of confinement plus anguish, by going mad, or dying. The Commissioners of Lunacy had power to liberate Alfred in spite of his

relations. And that power, you know, he had soberly but earnestly implored them to exercise.

After a delay that seemed as strange to him as postponing a hand to a drowning man, he received an official letter from Whitehall. With bounding heart he broke the seal, and devoured the contents. They ran thus:

"SIR, — By order of the Commissioners of Lunacy I am directed to inform you that they are in the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, which will be laid before the Board at their next meeting.

"I am, &c."

Alfred was bitterly disappointed at the small advance he had made. However, it was a great point to learn that his letters were allowed to go to the Commissioners at all, and would be attended to by degrees.

He waited and waited, and struggled hard to possess his soul in patience; at times his brain throbbed and his blood boiled, and he longed to kill the remorseless, kindless monsters who robbed him of his liberty, his rights as a man, and his Julia: but he knew this would not do; that what they wanted was to gnaw his reason away, and then who could disprove that he had always been mad? Now he felt that brooding on his wrong would infuriate him; so he clenched his teeth, and vowed a solemn vow that nothing should drive him mad. By advice of a patient he wrote again to the Commissioners begging for a special Commission to inquire into his case; and, this done, with rare stoicism, self-defence, and wisdom in

one so young, he actually sat down to read hard for his first class. Now, to do this, he wanted the Ethics, Politics, and Rhetoric of Aristotle, certain Dialogues of Plato, the Comedies of Aristophanes, the first class Historians, Demosthenes, Lucretius, a Greek Testament, Wheeler's Analysis, Prideaux, Horne, and several books of reference sacred and profane. But he could not get these books without Dr. Wycherley, and unfortunately he had cut that worthy dead in his own asylum.

"The Scornful Dog" had to eat wormwood pudding and humble pie. He gulped these delicacies as he might; and Dr. Wycherley showed excellent qualities; he entered into his maniac's studies with singular alacrity, supplied him with several classics from his own shelves, and borrowed the rest at the London Library. Nor did his zeal stop there: he offered to read an hour a day with him, and owned it would afford him the keenest gratification to turn out an Oxford first classman from his asylum. This remark puzzled Alfred, and set him thinking; it bore a subtle family resemblance to the observations he heard every day from the patients; it was so one-eyed.

Soon Alfred became the doctor's pet maniac. They were often closeted together in high discourse, and indeed discussed Psychology, Metaphysics, and Moral Philosophy with indefatigable zest, long after common sense would have packed them both off to bed, the donkeys. In fact, they got so thick that Alfred thought it only fair to say one day, "Mind, doctor, all these pleasant fruitful hours we spend together so sweetly will not prevent my indicting you for a conspiracy as

soon as I get out: it will rob the retribution of half its relish though."

"Ah, my dear young friend and fellow-student," said the doctor blandly, "let us not sacrifice the delights of our profitable occupation of imbibing the sweets of intellectual intercourse to vague speculations as to our future destiny. During the course of a long and not, I trust, altogether unprofitable, career, it has not unfrequently been my lot to find myself on the verge of being indicted, sued, assassinated, hung. Yet here I sit, as yet unimmolated on the altar of phrenetic vengeance. This is ascribable to the fact that my friends and pupils always adopt a more favourable opinion of me long before I part with them; and ere many days (and this I divine by infallible indicia), *your* cure will commence in earnest; and, in proportion as you progress to perfect restoration of the powers of judgment, you will grow in suspicion of the fact of being under a delusion, or rather I should say a very slight perversion and perturbation of the forces of your admirable intellect, and a proper subject for temporary seclusion. Indeed this consciousness of insanity is the one diagnostic of sanity that never deceives me: and, on the other hand, an obstinate persistence in the hypothesis of perfect rationality demonstrates the fact that insanity yet lingers in the convolutions and recesses of the brain, and that it would not be humane as yet to cast the patient on a world, in which he would inevitably be taken some ungenerous advantage of."

Alfred ventured to inquire whether *this* was not rather paradoxical.

"Certainly," said the ready doctor; "and paradoxicality is an indicial characteristic of truth in all matters beyond the comprehension of the vulgar."

"That *sounds* rational," said the maniac, very drily.

One afternoon, grinding hard for his degree, he was invited down stairs to see two visitors.

At that word he found out how prison tries the nerves. He trembled with hope, and fear. It was but for a moment: he bathed his face and hands to compose himself; made his toilet carefully, and went into the drawing-room, all on his guard. There he found Dr. Wycherley and two gentlemen; one was an ex-physician, the other an ex-barrister, who had consented to resign feelessness and brieflessness for a snug 1500*l.* a year at Whitehall. After a momentary greeting they continued the conversation with Dr. Wycherley, and scarcely noticed Alfred. They were there pro formâ; a plausible lunatic had pestered the Board, and extorted a visit of ceremony. Alfred's blood boiled, but he knew it must not boil over. He contrived to throw a short, pertinent remark in every now and then. This, being done politely, told; and at last Dr. Eskell, Commissioner of Lunacy, smiled and turned to him: "Allow me to put a few questions to you."

"The more the better, sir," said Alfred.

Dr. Eskell then asked him to describe minutely, and in order, all he had done since seven o'clock that day. And he did it. Examined him in the multiplication table. And he did it. And, while he was applying these old-fashioned tests, Wycherley's face wore an expression of pity, that was truly comical.

Now this Dr. Eskell had an itch for the classics: so he went on to say, "You have been a scholar, I hear."

"I am not old enough to be a scholar, sir," said Alfred; "but I am a student."

"Well, well; now can you tell me what follows this line?

Jusque datum sceleri canimus populumque potentem."

"Why, not at the moment."

"Oh, surely you can," said Dr. Eskell, ironically. "It is in a tolerably well-known passage. Come, try."

"Well, I'll *try*," said Alfred, sneering secretly "Let me see:

Mum — mum — mum — populumque potentem,
In sua victrici conversum viscera dextrâ."

"Quite right; now go on, if you can."

Alfred, who was playing with his examiner all this time, pretended to cudgel his brains, then went on, and warmed involuntarily with the lines:

"Cognatasque acies et rupto fœdere regni
Certatum totis concussi viribus orbis
In commune nefas; infestis que obvia signis
Signa, pares aquilas, et pila minantia pilis."

"He seems to have a good memory," said the examiner, rather taken aback.

"Oh, that is nothing for him," observed Wycherley;

"He has Horace all by heart; you'd wonder:
And mouths out Homer's Greek like thunder."

The great faculty of Memory thus tested, Dr. Eskell proceeded to a greater; Judgment. "Spirited lines those, sir."

"Yes, sir; but surely rather tumid. 'The whole *forces* of the shaken globe?' But little poets love big words."

"I see; you agree with Horace, that so great a work as an epic poem should open modestly, with an invocation."

"No, sir," said Alfred. "I think that rather an arbitrary and peevish canon of friend Horace. The Æneid, you know, begins just as he says an Epic ought not to begin; and the Æneid is the greatest Latin Epic. In the next place, the use of Modesty is to keep a man from writing an Epic Poem at all; but, if he will have that impudence, why then he had better have the courage to plunge into the Castalian stream, like Virgil and Lucan, not crawl in funking and holding on by the Muse's apron-string. But — excuse me — quorsum hæc tam putida tendunt? what have the Latin poets to do with this modern's sanity or insanity?"

Mr. Abbott snorted contemptuously in support of the query. But Dr. Eskell smiled, and said: "Continue to answer me as intelligently, and you may find it has a great deal to do with it."

Alfred took this hint, and said artfully, "Mine was a thoughtless remark: of course a gentleman of your experience can test the mind on any subject however trivial." He added piteously, "Still if you would but leave the poets, who are all half crazy themselves, and examine me in the philosophers of Antiquity, surely it would be a higher criterion."

Dr. Wycherley explained in a patronising whisper, "He labours under an abnormal contempt for poetry, dating from his attack. Previously to that he actually obtained a prize poem himself."

"Well, doctor, and after that am I wrong to despise poetry?"

They might have comprehended this on paper, but spoken it was too keen for them all three. The visitors stared. Dr. Wycherley came to their aid: "You might examine my young friend for hours, and not detect the one crevice in the brilliancy of his intellectual armour."

The maniac made a face as one that drinketh verjuice suddenly. "For pity's sake, doctor, don't be so inaccurate: say a spot on the brillancy, or a crevice in the armour; but not a crevice in the brillancy. My good friend here, gentlemen, deals in conjectural certificates and broken metaphors. He dislocates more tropes, to my sorrow, than even his friend Shakespeare, whom he thinks a greater philosopher than Aristotle, and who calls the murder of an individual sleeper the murder of sleep, confounding the concrete with the abstract, and then talks of taking arms against a sea of troubles; query, a cork jacket and a flask of brandy."

"Well, Mr. Hardie," said Dr. Eskell rather feebly, "let me tell you those passages which so shock your *peculiar* notions, are among the most applauded."

"Very likely, sir," retorted the maniac, whose logic was up; "but applauded only in a nation where the *floods* clap their hands every Sunday morning, and we all pray for peace, giving as our exquisite reason that we have got the God of hosts on our side in war."

Mr. Abbott, the other commissioner, had endured all this chat with an air of weary indifference. He now said to Dr. Wycherley, "I wish to put you a question or two in private."

Alfred was horribly frightened: this was the very

dodge that had ruined him at Silverton House. "Oh no, gentlemen," he cried, imploringly. "Let me have fair play. You have given me no secret audience; then why give my accuser one? I am charged with a single delusion; for mercy's sake go to the point at once, and examine me on that head."

"Now you talk sense," said Mr. Abbott; as if the previous topics had been chosen by Alfred.

"But that will excite him," objected Dr. Eskell; "it always does excite them."

"It excites the insane, but not the sane," said Alfred. "So there is another test; you will observe whether it excites *me*." Then, before they could interrupt him, he glided on: "The supposed hallucination is this: I strongly suspect my father, a bankrupt — and therefore dishonest — banker, of having somehow misappropriated a sum of fourteen thousand pounds, which sum is known to have been brought from India by one Captain Dood, and has disappeared."

"Stop a minute," said Mr. Abbott. "Who knows it, besides you?"

"The whole family of the Dodds. They will show you his letter from India, announcing his return with the money."

"Where do they live?"

"Albion Villa, Barkington."

Mr. Abbott noted the address in his book, and Alfred, mightily cheered and encouraged by this sensible act, went on to describe the various indications, which, insufficient singly, had by their united force driven him to his conclusion. When he described David's appearance and words on his father's lawn at

night, Wycherley interrupted him quietly: "Are you quite sure this was not a vision, a phantom of the mind heated by your agitation, and your suspicions?"

Dr. Eskell nodded assent, knowing nothing about the matter.

"Pray, doctor, was I the only person who saw this vision?" inquired Alfred, slily.

"I conclude so," said Wycherley, with an admirable smile.

"But why do you conclude so? because you are one of those who reason in a circle of assumptions. Now it happens that Captain Dodd was seen and felt on that occasion by three persons besides myself."

"Name them," said Mr. Abbott, sharply.

"A policeman called Reynolds, another policeman, whose name I don't know, and Miss Julia Dodd. The policemen helped me lift Captain Dodd off the grass, sir; Julia met us close by, and we four carried Dr. Wycherley's phantom home together to Albion Villa."

Mr. Abbott noted down all the names, and then turned to Dr. Wycherley. "What do you say to that?"

"I say it is a very important statement," said the doctor, blandly; "and that I am sure my young friend would not advance it unless he was firmly persuaded of its reality."

"Much obliged, doctor; and you would not contradict me so rashly in a matter I know all about and you know nothing about, if it was not your fixed habit to found facts on theories instead of theories on facts."

"There, that is enough," said Mr. Abbott. "I

have brought you both to an issue at last. I shall send to Barkington and examine the policemen and the Dodds."

"Oh, thank you, sir," cried Alfred with emotion. "If you once apply genuine tests like that to my case, I shall not be long in prison."

"Prison?" said Wycherley, reproachfully.

"Have you any complaint, then, to make of your treatment here?" inquired Dr. Eskell.

"No, no, sir," said Alfred warmly. "Dr. Wycherley is the very soul of humanity. Here are no tortures, no handcuffs nor leg-locks, no brutality, no insects that murder Sleep — without offence to Logic. In my last asylum the attendants inflicted violence, here they are only allowed to endure it. And, gentlemen, I must tell you a noble trait in my enemy there: nothing can make him angry with madmen; their lies, their groundless and narrow suspicions of him, their deplorable ingratitude to him, of which I see examples every day that rile *me* on his account; all these things seem to glide off him, baffled by the infinite kindness of his heart, and the incomparable sweetness of his temper; and he returns the duffers good for evil with scarcely an effort."

At this unexpected tribute the water stood in the doctor's eyes. It was no more than the truth; but this was the first man he had met intelligent enough to see his good qualities clearly and express them eloquently.

"In short," continued Alfred, "to be happy in his house all a man wants is to be insane. But, as I am not insane, I am miserable: no convict, no galley slave

is so wretched as I am, gentlemen. And what is my crime?"

"Well, well," said Dr. Eskell kindly, "I think it likely you will not be very long in confinement." They then civilly dismissed him; and on his departure asked Dr. Wycherley his candid opinion. Dr. Wycherley said he was now nearly cured; his ability to discuss his delusion without excitement was of itself a proof of that. But in another month he would be better still. The doctor concluded his remarks thus:

"However, gentlemen, you have heard him: now judge for yourselves whether anybody can be as clever as he is, without the presence of more or less abnormal excitement of the organs of intelligence."

It was a bright day for Alfred: he saw he had made an excellent impression on the Commissioners, and, as luck does not always come single, after many vain attempts to get a letter posted to Julia, he found this very afternoon a nurse was going away next day. He offered her a guinea, and she agreed to post a letter. Oh the happiness it was to the poor prisoner to write it, and unburden his heart and tell his wrongs. He kept his manhood for his enemies; his tears fell on the paper he sent to his forlorn bride. He had no misgivings of her truth: he judged her by himself: gave her credit for anxiety, but not for doubt. He concluded a long, ardent, tender letter by begging her to come and see him, and, if refused admission, to publish his case in the newspapers, and employ a lawyer to proceed against all the parties concerned in his detention. Day after day he waited for an answer to his letter; none came. Then he began to be sore perplexed, and torn with agonising doubts. What

if her mind was poisoned too! What if she thought him mad! What if some misfortune had befallen her! What if she had believed him dead, and her heart had broken! Hitherto he had seen his own trouble chiefly: but now he began to think day and night on hers; and though he ground on for his degree not to waste time, and not to be driven mad, yet it was almost superhuman labour; sighs issued from his labouring breast while his hard, indomitable brain laboured away, all uphill, at Aristotle's Divisions and Definitions.

On the seventh day, the earliest the mad statute allowed, the two Commissioners returned, and this time Mr. Abbott took the lead, and told him that the policeman Reynolds had left the force, and the Dodds had left the town, and were in London, but their address not known.

At this, Alfred was much agitated. She was alive, and perhaps near him.

"I have heard a good deal of your story," said Mr. Abbott, "and coupling it with what we have seen of you, we think your relatives have treated you, and a young lady of whom everybody speaks with respect ——"

"God bless you for saying that! God bless you!"

"— treated you both, I say, with needless severity."

Dr. Eskell then told him the result of the Special Commission, now closed. "I believe you to be cured," said he; "and Mr. Abbott has some doubts whether you were ever positively insane. We shall lay your case before the Board at once, and the Board will write to the party who signed the order, and propose to him to discharge you at once."

At this magnificent project Alfred's countenance

fell, and he stared with astonishment. "What! have you not the power to do me justice, without soliciting Injustice to help you?"

"The Board has the power," said Dr. Eskell; "but for many reasons they exercise it with prudence and reserve. Besides, it is only fair to those who have signed the order, to give them the graceful office of liberating the patient: it paves the way to reconciliation."

Alfred sighed. The Commissioners, to keep up his heart, promised to send him copies of their correspondence with the person who had signed the order. "Then," said Mr. Abbott kindly, "you will see your case is not being neglected."

The following précis, though imperfect, will give some idea of the correspondence:

1. The Board wrote to Thomas Hardie, letting him know the result of the Special Commission, and requesting him to discharge his nephew.

Thomas quaked. Richard smiled, and advised Thomas to take no notice. By this a week was gained to Injustice, and lost to Justice.

2. The Board pointed out Thomas Hardie's inadvertence in not answering No. 1; enclosed copy of it, and pressed for a reply.

Thomas quaked, Richard smiled.

3. Thomas Hardie to the Board. From what he had heard, it would be premature to discharge Alfred. Should prefer to wait a month or two.

4. Alfred to Board warning them against this proposal. To postpone justice was to refuse justice, certainly for a time, probably for ever.

5. The Board to Thomas Hardie suggesting that if

not released immediately he ought to have a trial — i.e. be allowed to go into the world with a keeper.

6. Alfred to the Board begging that Dr. Sampson, an honest independent physician, might be allowed to visit him and report to them.

7. The Board to Alfred declining this for the present as unadvisable, they being in correspondence with the person who had signed the order — with a view to his liberation.

8. T. Hardie to the Board shuffling, and requesting time to make further inquiries.

9. The Board suggesting there should be some reasonable limit to delay.

10. T. Hardie asking for a month to see about it.

11. The Board suggesting a week.

12. Alfred Hardie asking permission to be visited by a solicitor with a view to protection of his liberty and property.

13. The Board declining this, pending their correspondence with other parties; but asking him for the names and addresses of all his trustees.

14. Thomas Hardie informing the Board he had now learned Alfred had threatened to kill his father as soon as ever he should get out, and leaving the Board to discharge him on their own responsibility if they chose after this warning: but declining peremptorily to do so himself.

15, 16, 17. The Board, by advice of Mr. Abbott, to Alfred's trustees, warning them against any alienation of Alfred's money, under the notion that he was legally a lunatic; and saying that a public Inquiry appeared inevitable, owing to Mr. T. Hardy's unwillingness to enter into their views.

18. To Alfred, inquiring whether he wished to encounter the expense of Chancery procedings to establish his sanity?

19. Alfred to the Board, imploring them to use their powers and discharge him without further delay, and assuring them he meditated no violence on his liberation, but should proceed against all parties under legal advice.

20. The Board to T. Hardie, warning him that he must in future pay Alfred's maintenance in Asylum out of his own pocket, and pressing him either to discharge the young man, or else to apply to the Lord Chancellor for a Commission de Lunatico Inquirendo, and enclosing copy of a letter from Wycherley saying the patient was harmless.

21. T. Hardie respectfully declining to do either, but reminding the Commissioners that the matter could be thrown into Chancery without his consent only the expense, which would be tremendous, would fall on the lunatic's estate, which might hereafter be regretted by the party himself. He concluded by promisifg to come to town and visit Alfred with his family physician, and write further in a week.

Having thus thrown dust in the eyes of the Board, Thomas Hardie and Richard consulted with a notoriously unscrupulous madhouse keeper in the suburbs of London, and effected a masterstroke; whereof anon.

The correspondence had already occupied three months, and kept Alfred in a fever of the mind; of all the maddening things with which he had been harassed by the pretended curers of insanity, this tried him hardest. To see a dozen honest gentlemen wishing to do justice, able to do justice by one manly stroke of

the pen, yet forego their vantage-ground, and descend to coax an able rogue to do their duty and undo his own interest and rascality! To see a strong cause turned into a weak one by the timidity of champions clad by law in complete steel; and a rotten cause, against which Law and Power, as well as Truth, Justice, and Common Sense, had now declared, turned into a strong one by the pluck and cunning of his one unarmed enemy! The ancients feigned that the ingenious gods tortured Tantalus in hell by ever-present thirst, and water flowing to just the outside of his lips. A Briton can thirst for liberty as hard as Tantalus or hunted deer can thirst for cooling springs: and this soul-gnawing correspondence brought liberty, and citizenhood, and love, and happiness, to the lips of Alfred's burning, pining, aching heart, again, and again, and again; then carried them away from him in mockery. Oh the sickening anguish of Hope deferred, and deferred:

The Hell it is in suing long to bide.

But indeed his hopes began to sicken for good when he found that the Board would not allow any honest independent physician to visit him, or any solicitor to see him. At first, indeed, they refused it because Mr. Thomas Hardie was going to bail him out: but when T. Hardie would not move at their request, then, on a fresh application, they refused it, giving as their reason that they had already refused it. Yet in so keen a battle he would not throw away a chance: so he determined to win Dr. Wycherley altogether by hook or by crook, and get a certificate of sanity from him. Now a single white lie, he knew, would do the

trick. He had only to say that Hamlet was mad. And "Hamlet was mad" is easily said.

Dr. Wycherley, you see, was a collector of mad people, and collectors are always amateurs, and very seldom connoisseurs. His turn of mind coöperating with his interests, led him to put down any man a lunatic, whose intellect was manifestly superior to his own. Alfred Hardie, and one or two more contemporaries, had suffered by this humour of the good doctor's. Nor did the dead escape him entirely. Pascal, according to Wycherley, was a madman with an illusion about a precipice; John Howard a moral lunatic in whom the affections were reversed; Saul a moping maniac with homicidal paroxysms and nocturnal visions; Paul an incoherent lunatic, who in his writings flies off at a tangent, and who admits having once been the victim of a photopsic illusion in broad daylight; Nebuchadnezzar was a lycanthropical lunatic; Joan of Arc a theomaniac; Bobby Burton and Oliver Cromwell were melancholy maniacs; Napoleon was an ambitious maniac, in whom the sense of impossibility became gradually extinguished by visceral and cerebral derangement; Porson an oinomaniac; Luther a phrenetic patient of the old demoniac breed, alluded to by Shakespeare:

> One sees more devils than vast Hell can hold.
> That is the madman.

But without any disrespect to any of these gentlemen, he assigned the golden crown of Insanity to Hamlet. To be sure this character tells his friends in the play he shall *feign* insanity, and swears them not to reveal the reason; and after this hint to his friends and the audience (it is notorious he was not written

for readers) he keeps his word, and does it as cleverly as if his name was David or Brutus instead of Hamlet; indeed, like Edgar, he rather overdoes it, and so puzzles his enemies in the play, and certain German criticasters and English mad doctors in the closet, and does not puzzle his bosom friend in the play one bit, nor the pit for whom he was created. Add to this his sensibility, and his kindness to others, and his eloquent grief at the heartrending situation, which his father's and mother's son was placed in and had brains to realise, though his psychological critics, it seems, have not; and add to all that the prodigious extent of his mind, his keen observation, his deep reflection, his brilliant fancy, united for once in a way with the great Academic, or judicial, intellect, that looks down and sees all the sides of everything — and what can this rare intellectual compound be? Wycherley decided the question. Hamlet was too much greater in the world of mind than S. T. Coleridge and his German criticasters, too much higher, deeper, and broader than Esquirol, Pinel, Sauze, Haslam, Munro, Pagan, Wigan, Prichard, Romberg, Wycherley, and such small deer, to be anything but a madman.

Now, in their midnight discussions, Dr. Wycherley more than once alluded to the insanity of Hamlet; and offered proofs. But Alfred declined the subject as too puerile. "A man must exist before he can be insane," said the Oxonian philosopher, severe in youthful gravity. But, when he found that Dr. Wycherley, had he lived in Denmark at the time, would have conferred cannily with Hamlet's uncle, removed that worthy relative's disbelief in Hamlet's insanity, and signed the young gentleman away behind his back into

a lunatic asylum, Alfred began to sympathise with this posthumous victim of Psychological Science. "I believe the bloke was no madder than I am," said he. He got the play, studied it afresh, compared the fiction with the legend, compared Hamlet humbugging his enemies and their tool, Ophelia, with Hamlet opening his real mind to himself or his Horatio the very next moment; contrasted the real madness the author has portrayed in the plays of Hamlet and Lear by the side of these extravagant imitations, to save, if possible, even dunces, and dreamers, and criticasters from being taken in by the latter; and at their next séance pitched into the doctor's pet chimera, and what with logic, fact, ridicule, and the author's lines, knocked it to atoms double quick.

Now, in their midnight discussions, Dr. Wycherley had always handled the question of Alfred Hardie's Sanity or Insanity with a philosophical coolness the young man admired, and found it hard to emulate; but this philosophic calmness deserted him the moment Hamlet's insanity was disputed, and the harder he was pressed, the redder, the angrier, the louder, the more confused the Psychological physician became; and presently he got furious, and burst out of the anti-spasmodic or round-about style, and called Alfred a d—d ungrateful, insolent puppy, and went stamping about the room; and, finally, to the young man's horror, fell down in a fit of an epileptic character, grinding his teeth and foaming at the mouth.

Alfred was filled with regret, and, though alarmed, had the presence of mind not to call for assistance. The fit was a very mild one in reality, though horrible to look at. The doctor came to, and asked feebly for

wine. Alfred got it him, and the doctor, with a mixture of cunning and alarm in his eye, said he had fainted away, or nearly. Alfred assented coaxingly, and looked sheepish. After this he took care never to libel Hamlet's intellect again by denying his insanity; for he was now convinced of what he had long half suspected, that the doctor had a bee in his own bonnet; and Alfred had studied true insanity all this time, and knew how inhumane it is to oppose a monomaniac's foible; it only infuriates and worries him. No power can convince him.

But now he resolved to play on the doctor's foible. It went against his conscience; but the temptation was so strong. He came to him with a hang-dog air:

"Doctor," said he, "I have been thinking over your arguments, and I capitulate. If Hamlet ever existed, he was as mad as a March hare." And he blushed at this his first quibble.

Dr. Wycherley beamed with satisfaction.

"My young friend, this gives me sincere pleasure; not on my account, but on your own. There goes one of your illusions then. Now tell me — the 14,000*l*! Have you calmly reconsidered that too?"

Alfred hung his head, and looked guiltier and guiltier.

"Why," said he, "that never amounted to anything more than a strong suspicion. It has long ceased to occupy my mind in excess. However, should I ever be so fortunate as to recover my liberty, I have no objection to collect the evidence about it pro and con., and then make you the judge instead of myself."

This he delivered with an admirable appearance of indifference.

"Very well, sir," said the doctor drily. "Then, now, I have a piece of good news for *you*."

"Oh, doctor, what is that?"

"Your cure is complete; that is all! You are now a sane man, as sane as I am."

Alfred was a little disappointed at this piece of news; but recovering himself, asked him to certify that, and let him send the certificate to the Board. Dr. Wycherley said he would with pleasure.

"I'll bring it to you when I make my round," said he.

Alfred retired triumphant, and went in at Plato with a good heart.

In about an hour Dr. Wycherley paid him the promised visit. But what may not an hour bring forth? He came with mortification and regret in his face to tell Alfred that an order of transfer had been signed by the proper parties, and countersigned by two Commissioners, and he was to go to Dr. Wolf's asylum that day.

Alfred groaned. "I knew my father would outwit my feeble friends somehow or other," said he. "What is his game? do you know?"

"I suppose to obtain a delay; and meantime get you into an asylum where they will tell the Commissioners you are worse again, and perhaps do something to make their words good. Dr. Wolf, between ourselves, will say or do almost anything for money. And his asylum is conducted on the old system; though he pretends not."

"My dear friend," said Alfred, "will you do me a favour?"

"How could I deny you anything at this sorrowful moment?"

"Here is an advertisement I want inserted in the Morning Advertiser."

"Oh, I can't do that, I fear."

"Look at it before you break my heart by refusing me."

Dr. Wycherley looked at it, and said it was innocent, being unintelligible: and he would insert it himself.

"Three insertions, dear doctor," said Alfred. "Here is the money."

The doctor then told him sorrowfully he must pack up his things. Dr. Wolf's keepers were waiting for him.

The moment of parting came. Then Alfred solemnly forgave Dr. Wycherley for signing away his wits, and thanked him for all his kindness and humanity. "We shall never meet again, I fear," said he; "I feel a weight of foreboding here about my heart I never felt before; yet my trials have been many and great. I think the end is at hand." Dr. Wolf's keepers received him, and their first act was to handcuff him. The cold steel struck into him deeper than his wrist, and reminded him of Silverton Grove; he could not suppress a shudder. The carriage rolled all through London with him. He saw the Parks with autumn's brown and golden tints: he saw the people, some rich, some poor, but none of them prisoners. He saw a little girl all rags. "Oh, if I could be as ragged as you are," he said, "and free."

At last they reached Drayton House: a huge old mansion, fortified into a jail. His handcuffs were whipped off in the yard. He was ushered into a large, gloomy drawing-room. Dr. Wolf soon came to him, and they measured each other by the eye like two prize-fighters. Dr. Wolf's eye fell under Alfred's, and the latter felt he was capable of much foul play. He was one of the old bull-necked breed; and contained the bull-dog and the spaniel in his single nature. "I hope you will be comfortable here, sir," said he, doggedly.

"I will try, sir."

"The first-class patients dine in half an hour."

"I will be ready, sir."

"Full dress in the evening; there are several ladies." Alfred assented by a bow. Dr. Wolf rang a bell, and told a servant to show Mr. Hardie his room.

He had just time to make his toilet when the bell rang for dinner.

As he went down a nurse met him, held up something white to him as she came, lowered it quickly, and dropped it at his feet in passing.

It was a billet-doux.

It was twisted into a pretty shape, scented, and addressed to Mr. Hardie, in a delicate Italian hand, and in that pale ink which seems to reflect the charming timidity of the fair who use it.

He wondered; carried it into a recess; then opened it and read it.

It contained but this one line:

"*Drink nothing but water at dinner.*"

These words in that delicate Italian hand sent a

chill through Alfred. What on earth was all this? Was he to be poisoned? Was his life aimed at now instead of his reason? What was this mysterious drama prepared for him the very moment he set his foot in the place, perhaps before? A poisoner, and a friend! Both strangers. He went down to dinner: and contrived to examine every lady and gentleman at the table. But they were all strangers. Presently a servant filled his glass with beer; he looked and saw it was poured from a small jug holding only his portion. Alfred took his ring off his finger, and holding the glass up dropped his ring in.

"What is that for?" inquired one or two.

"Oh, my ring has a peculiar virtue, it tells me what is good for me. Ah! what do I see? my ruby changes colour. Fetch me a clean glass." And he filled it with water from a carafe. "No, sir, leave the beer. I'll analyse it in my room after dinner; I'm a chemist."

Dr. Wolf changed colour, and was ill at ease. Here was a bold and ugly customer. However, he said nothing, and felt sure his morphia could not be detected in beer by any decomposer but the stomach. Still he was rather mystified.

In the evening Alfred came dressed into the drawing-room, and found several gentlemen and ladies there. One of the ladies seemed to attract the lion's share of male homage. Her back was turned to Alfred; but it was a beautiful back, with great magnificent neck and shoulders, and a skin like satin; she was tall but rounded and symmetrical, had a massive but long and shapely white arm, and perfect hand: and masses of

thick black hair sat on her grand white poll like a raven on a marble pillar.

It was not easy to get near her; for the mad gentleman were fawning on her all round; like Queen Elizabeth's courtiers.

However, Dr. Wolf, seeing Alfred standing alone, said, "Let me introduce you," and took him round to her. The courtiers fell back a little. The lady turned her stately head, and her dark eyes ran lightly all over Alfred in a moment.

He bowed, and blushed like a girl. She curtseyed composedly and without a symptom of recognition — deep water runs still — and Dr. Wolf introduced them ceremoniously:

"Mr. Hardie — Mrs. Archbold."

CHAPTER III.

On Alfred's leaving Silverton, Mrs. Archbold was prostrated. It was a stunning blow to her young passion, and left her weary, desolate.

But she was too strong to lie helpless under disappointed longings. Two days she sat stupified with the heartache; after that she bustled about her work in a fervour of half-crazy restlessness, and ungovernable irritability, quenched at times by fits of weeping. As she wept apart, but raged and tyrannised in public, she soon made Silverton House Silverton Oven, especially to those who had the luck to be of her sex. Then Baker timidly remonstrated: at the first word she snapped him up and said a change would be good for both of them: he apologised; in vain: that very day

she closed by letter with Dr. Wolf, who had often invited her to be his "Matron." Her motive, half hidden from herself, was to be anywhere near her favourite.

Installed at Drayton House, she waited some days, and coquetted woman-like with her own desires, then dressed neatly, but soberly, and called at Dr. Wycherley's; sent in a note explaining who she was, with a bit of soft sawder, and asked to see Alfred.

She was politely but peremptorily refused. She felt this rebuff bitterly. She went home stung and tingling to the core. But Bitters wholesome be: offended pride now allied with strong good sense to wither a wild affection; and, as it was no longer fed by the presence of its object, her wound healed, all but the occasional dull throbbing that precedes a perfect cure.

At this stage of her convalescence Dr. Wolf told her in an off-hand way that Mr. Hardie, a patient of doubtful insanity, was coming to his asylum, to be kept there by hook or by crook. (She was entirely in Wolf's confidence, and he talked of these things to her in English.) The impenetrable creature assented outwardly, with no sign of emotion whatever, but one flash of the eye, and one heave of the bosom swiftly suppressed. She waited calmly and patiently till she was alone; then yielded to joy and triumph; they seemed to leap inside her. But this very thing alarmed her. "Better for me never to see him again," she thought. "His power over me is too terrible. Ah, good-bye to the peace and comfort I have been building up! He will scatter them to the winds. He has."

She tried not to think of him too much. And, while she was so struggling, Wolf let out that Alfred

was to have morphia at dinner the first day; morphia, the accursed drug with which these dark men in these dark places coax the reason away out of the head by degrees, or with a potent dose stupify the victim, then act surprise, alarm; and make his stupor the ground for applying medical treatment to the doomed wretch. Edith Archbold knew the game, and at the word morphia Pity and Passion rose in her bosom irresistible. She smiled in Dr. Wolf's face, and hated him; and secretly girt herself up to baffle him, and protect Alfred's reason, and win his heart through his gratitude.

She received him as I have related, to throw dust in Dr. Wolf's eyes: but she acted so admirably that some went into Alfred's. "Ah," thought he, "she is angry with herself for her amorous folly; and, with the justice of her sex, she means to spite poor me for it." He sighed; for he felt her hostility would be fatal to him. To give her no fresh offence, he fell into her manner, and treated her with a world of distant respect. Then again, who else but she could have warned him against poison? Then again, if so, why look so cold and stern at him? He cast one or two wistful glances at her; but the artful woman of thirty was impenetrable in public to the candid man of twenty-one. Even her passion could not put them on an equality.

That night he could not sleep. He lay wondering what would be the next foul practice, and how he should parry it.

He wrote next morning to the Commissioners that two of their number, unacquainted with the previous proceedings of the Board, had been surprised into

endorsing an order of transfer to an asylum bearing a very inferior character to Dr. Wycherley's; the object of this was clearly foul play. Accordingly, Dr. Wolf had already tried to poison his reason, by drugging his beer at dinner. He added that Dr. Wycherley had now signed a certificate of his sanity, and implored the Board to inspect it, and discharge him at once, or else let a solicitor visit him at once, and take the requisite steps towards a public inquiry.

While waiting anxiously for the answer, it cost him all his philosophy to keep his heart from eating itself. But he fought the good fight of Reason: he invited the confidences of the quieter mad people, and established a little court, and heard their grievances, and by impartial decisions and good humour won the regard of the moderate patients, and of the attendants, all but three; Rooke, the head keeper, a morose burly ruffian; Hayes, a bilious subordinate, Rooke's shadow; and Vulcan, a huge mastiff that would let nobody but Rooke touch him; he was big as a large calf, and formidable as a small lion, though nearly toothless with age. He was let loose in the yard at night, and was an element in the Restraint System; many a patient would have tried to escape but for Vulcan. He was also an invaluable howler at night, and so co-operated with Dr. Wolf's bugs and fleas to avert sleep, that vile foe to insanity and all our diseases, private asylums included.

Alfred treated Mrs. Archbold with a distant respect that tried her hard. But that able woman wore sweetness and unobtrusive kindness, and bided her time. At last he gave her an opportunity, and it will be seen whether she took it.

In Drayton House the keeperesses eclipsed the keepers in cruelty to the poorer patients. No men except Dr. Wolf and his assistant had a pass-key into their department, so there was nobody they could deceive, nobody they held worth the trouble. In the absence of male critics they showed their real selves, and how wise it is to trust that gentle sex in the dark with irresponsible power over females. With unflagging patience they applied the hourly torture of petty insolence, needless humiliation, unreasonable refusals, to the poor madwomen; bored them with the poisoned gimlet, and made their hearts bleeding pincushions. But minute cruelty and wild caprice were not enough for them, though these never tired nor rested; they must vilify them too with degrading and savage names. Billingsgate might have gone to school to Drayton House. Inter alia they seemed in love with a term that Othello hit upon; only they used it not once, but fifty times a day, and struck decent women with it on the face, like a scorpion whip; and then the scalding tears were sure to run in torrents adown their silly, honest, burning cheeks. But this was not all; they had got a large tank in a flagged room, nominally for cleanliness and cure, but really for bane and torture. For the least offence, or out of mere wantonness, they would drag a patient stark naked across the yard, and thrust her bodily under water again and again, keeping her down till almost gone with suffocation, and dismissing her more dead than alive with obscene and insulting comments ringing in her ears, to get warm again in the cold. This my ladies called "tanking."

In the ordinary morning ablutions they tanked without suffocating. But the immersion of the whole

body in cold water was of itself a severe trial to those numerous patients in whom the circulation was weak; and, as medical treatment, hurtful and even dangerous. Finally these keeperesses, with diabolical insolence and cruelty, would bathe twenty patients in this tank, and then make them drink that foul water for their meals.

"The dark places of the land are full of horrible cruelty."

One day they tanked so savagely that Nurse Eliza, after months of sickly disapproval, came to the new redresser of grievances, and told.

What was he to do? He seized the only chance of redress; he ran panting with indignation to Mrs. Archbold, and blushing high, said imploringly, "Oh, Mrs. Archbold, you used to be kind hearted——" and could say no more for something rising in his throat.

Mrs. Archbold smiled encouragingly on him, and said softly, "I am the same I always was — to you Alfred."

"Oh, thank you; then pray send for Nurse Eliza, and hear the cruelties that are being done to the patients within a yard of us."

"You had better tell me yourself, if you want me to pay any attention."

"I can't. I don't know how to speak to a lady of such things as are done here. The brutes! the cowardly she-devils! Oh, how I should like to kill them."

Mrs. Archbold laughed a little at his enthusiasm (fancy caring so what was done to a pack of women), and sent for Nurse Eliza. She came, and being questioned told Mrs. Archbold more than she had

Alfred. "And, ma'am," said she, whimpering, "they have just been tanking one they had no business to touch; it is Mrs. Dale, her that is so close on her confinement. They tanked her cruel they did, and kept her under water till she was nigh gone. I came away; I couldn't stand it."

Alfred was walking about in a fury, and Nurse Eliza, in making this last revolting communication, lowered her voice for him not to hear; but his senses were quick. I think he heard, for he turned and came quickly to them.

"Mrs. Archbold, you are strong and brave — for a woman; oh, do go in to them and take them by the throat and shake the life out of them, the merciless, cowardly beasts! Oh that I could be a woman for an hour, or they could be men, I'd soon have my foot on some of the wretches."

Mrs. Archbold acted Ignition. "Come with me both of you," she said, and they were soon in the female department. Up came keeperesses directly, smirking and curtseying to her, and pretending not to look at Adonis. "Which of you nurses tanked Mrs. Dale?" said she, sternly.

"'Twasn't I, ma'am, 'twasn't I."

"Oh, fie!" said Eliza to one, "you know you were at the head of it."

She pointed out two as the leaders. The Archbold instantly had them seized by the others — who, with treachery equal to their cowardice, turned eagerly against their fellow-culprits, to make friends with Power — and inviting all the sensible maniacs who had been tanked, to assist or inspect, she bared her own statuesque arms, and, ably aided, soon plunged the

offenders, screaming, crying, and whining, like spaniel bitches whipped, under the dirty water. They swallowed some, and appreciated their own acts. Then she forced them to walk twice round the yard with their wet clothes clinging to them, hooted by the late victims.

"There," said Alfred, "let that teach you men will not own hyænas in petticoats for women."

Poor Alfred took all the credit of this performance; but in fact, when the Archbold invited him to bear a hand, he showed the white feather.

"*I* won't touch the blackguardesses," said he, haughtily turning it off on the score of contempt. "*You* give it them! Again! again! Brava!"

Mosaic retribution completed, Mrs. Archbold told the nurses if ever "tanking" recurred she would bundle the whole female staff into the street, and then have them indicted by the Commissioners.

These virtuous acts did Edith Archbold for love for a young man. Whether mad women or sane, women pregnant, or the reverse, were tanked or not, she cared at heart no more than whether sheep were washed or no in Ettrick's distant dale. She was retiring with a tender look at Alfred, and her pulse secretly unaccelerated by sheep-washing of she-wolves, when her grateful favourite appealed to her again:

"Dear Mrs. Archbold, shall we punish and not comfort? This poor Mrs. Dale!"

The Archbold could have boxed his ears. "Dear boy," she murmured tenderly, "you teach us all our duty." She visited the tanked one, found her in a cold room after it, shivering like ague, and her teeth chattering. Mrs. Archbold had her to the fire, and

got her warm clothes, and a pint of wine, and probably saved her life and her child's — for love of a young man.

Why I think Mrs. Dale would otherwise have left this shifting scene, Mrs. Carey, the last woman in her condition they tanked and then turned into a flagged cell that only wanted one frog of a grotto, was found soon after moribund; on which they bundled her out of the asylum to die. She did die next day, at home, but murdered by the asylum; and they told the Commissioners she died through her friends taking her away from the asylum too soon. The Commissioners had nothing to do but believe this, and did believe it. Inspectors, who visit a temple of darkness, lies, cunning, and hypocrisy, four times a year, know mighty little of what goes on there the odd three hundred and sixty-one days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and fifty-seven seconds.*

"Now, Alfred," said Mrs. Archbold, "I can't be everywhere, or know everything; so you come to me when anything grieves you; and let me be the agent of your humanity."

She said this so charmingly he was surprised into kissing her fair hand; then blushed, and thanked her warmly. Thus she established a chain between them. When he let too long elapse without appealing to her, she would ask his advice about the welfare of this or that patient; and so she cajoled him by the two foibles she had discerned in him — his vanity and his humanity.

Besides Alfred, there were two patients in Drayton

* Arithmetic of my boyhood. I hear the world revolves some minutes quicker now.

House who had never been insane; a young man, and an old woman; of whom anon. There were also three ladies and one gentleman, who had been deranged, but had recovered years ago. This little incident, Recovery, is followed in a public asylum by instant discharge; but, in a private one, Money, not Sanity, is apt to settle the question of egress. The gentleman's case was scarce credible in the nineteenth century: years ago, being undeniably cracked, he had done what Dr. Wycherley told Alfred was a sure sign of sanity; i.e. he had declared himself insane: and had even been so reasonable as to sign his own order and certificates, and so imprison himself illegally, but with perfect ease; no remonstrance against that illegality from the guardians of the law! When he got what plain men call sane, he naturally wanted to be free, and happening to remember he alone had signed the order of imprisonment, and the imaginary doctor's certificates, he claimed his discharge from illegal confinement. Answer: "First obtain a legal order for your discharge." On this he signed an order for his dis-discharge. "That is not a legal order." "It is as legal as the order on which I am here." Granted; but, legally or not, the asylum has *got* you; the open air has not got you. Possession is ninety-nine points of Lunacy law. Die your own illegal prisoner, and let your kinsfolk eat your land, and drink your consols, and bury you in a pauper's shroud. All that Alfred could do for these victims was to promise to try and get them out some day, D.V. But there was a weak-minded youth, Francis Beverley, who had the honour to be under the protection of the Lord Chancellor. Now a lunatic or a Softy protected by that

functionary is literally a lamb protected by a wolf, and that wolf ex officio the cruelest, cunningest old mangler and fleecer of innocents in Christendom. Chancery lunatics are the richest class, yet numbers of them are flung among pauper and even criminal lunatics, at a few pounds a year, while their committees bag four-fifths of the money that has been assigned to keep the patient in comfort.

Unfortunately the protection of the Chancellor extends to Life and Reason, as well as Fleece; with the following result:

In public asylums about forty per cent are said to be cured.

In private ones twenty-five per cent at least; most of them poorish.

Of Chancery Lunatics not five per cent.

Finally, one-third of all the Chancery Lunatics do every six years exchange the living tombs they are fleeced and bullied in for dead tombs, where they rest; and go from the sham protection of the Lord Chancellor of England to the real protection of their Creator and their Judge.

These statistics have been long before the world, and are dead figures to the Skimmer of things, but tell a dark tale to the Reader of things: so dark, that I pray Heaven to protect me, and all other weak inoffensive persons, from the protection of my Lord Chancellor in this kind.

Beverley was so unfortunate as to exist before the date of the above petition; and suffered the consequences.

He was an aristocrat by birth, noble on both sides of his house, and unluckily had money. But for that

he would have been a labouring man, and free. My Lord Protector committed him with six hundred pounds a year maintenance money to the care of his committee, the Honourable Fynes Beverley.

Now this corporate, yet honourable, individual, to whom something was committed, and so Chancery Lane called him in its own sweet French the thing committed, was a gentleman of birth, breeding, and intelligence. He undertook to take care of his simple cousin: and what he did take care of was himself.

THE SUB-LETTING SWINDLE.

1. The Honourable Fynes Beverley, Anglo-French committee, or crown tenant, sub-let soft Francis for 300*l.* a year, pocketed 300*l.*, and washed his hands of Frank.

2. Mr. Heselden, the sub-tenant, sub-let the Softy of high degree for 150*l.*, pocketed the surplus, and washed his hands of him.

3. The 150*l.* man sub-let him to Dr. Wolf at 60*l.* a year, pouched the surplus, and washed his hands of him.

And now what on earth was left for poor Dr. Wolf to do? Could he sub-embezzle a Highlander's breeks? Could he subtract more than her skin from off the singed cat? Could he peel the core of a rotten apple? Could he pare a grated cheese rind? Could he flay a skinned flint? Could he fleece a hog just after Satan had shaved it as clean as a bantam's egg?

Let no man dare to limit genius; least of all the genius of extortion.

Dr. Wolf screwed comparatively more out of young

Frank than did any of the preceding screws. He turned him into a servant of all work and half starved him; money profit, 45*l.* out of the 60*l.*, or three-fourths, whereas the others had only bagged one-half. But by this means he got a good servant without wages, and on half a servant's food, clearing 22*l.* and 12*l.* in these two items.

Victim of our great national vice and foible Vicariousness, this scion of a noble house, protected in theory by the Crown, vicariouly sub-protected by the Chancellor, sub-vicariously sub-sham-protected by his kin, was really flung unprotected into the fleece market, and might be seen — at the end of the long chain of subs, pros, vices, locos, shams, shuffles, swindles, and lies — shaking the carpets, making the beds, carrying the water, sweeping the rooms, and scouring the sordid vessels, of thirty patients in Drayton House, not one of whom was his equal either in birth or wealth; and of four menials, who were all his masters and hard ones. His work was always doing, never done. He was not the least mad nor bad, but merely of feeble intellect all round. Fifty thousand gentlemen's families would have been glad of him at 300*l.* a year, and made a son and a brother of him. But he was under the protection of the Lord Chancellor. Thin, half-starved, threadbare, out at elbows, the universal butt, scoffed at by the very lunatics, and especially ill treated by the attendants whose work he did gratis, he was sworn at, jeered, insulted, cuffed and even kicked, every day of his hard, hard life. And yet he was a gentleman, though a soft one; his hands, his features, his carriage, his address, had all an indefinable stamp of race. How had it outlived such crushing, degrading

usage? I don't know; how does a daisy survive the iron roller? Alfred soon found him out, and, to everybody's amazement, especially Frank's, remonstrated gently but resolutely and eloquently, and soon convinced the majority, sane and insane, that a creature so meek and useful merited especial kindness, not cruelty. One keeper, The Robin, alias Tom Wales, an ex-prizefighter, was a warm convert to this view. Among the maniacs only one held out, and said contemptuously he couldn't see it.

"Well," said Alfred, "lay a finger on him after this, and I'll lay a hand on you, and aid your intellectual vision."

Rooke and Hayes treated remonstrance with open and galling contempt. Yet the tide of opinion changed so, they did not care to defy it openly: but they bullied poor Beverley now and then on the sly, and he never told. He was too inoffensive for this world. But one day, as Alfred was sitting with his door ajar, writing a letter of earnest expostulation to the Commissioners, who had left his first unanswered, he heard Hayes at the head of the stairs call roughly "Frank! Frank!"

"Sir," replied the soft little voice of young Beverley.

"Come, be quick young shaver."

"I'm coming sir," and up ran Beverley.

"Here take this tray down stairs."

"Yes, sir."

"Stop, there's a bit of bread for you." And Hayes chucked him a crust, as one throws it to another man's dog.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Beverley, stooping

down for it, and being habitually as hungry as a ratcatcher's tyke, took an eager bite in that position.

"How dare you eat it there," said Hayes brutally: "take it to your own crib: come, mizzle." And with that lent him a contemptuous kick behind, which owing to his position sent him off his balance flat on the tray; a glass broke under him; poor young Mr. Beverley uttered a cry of dismay, for he knew Hayes would not own himself the cause; Hayes cursed him for an awkward idiot, and the oath went off into a howl, for Alfred ran out at him brimful of Moses, and with a savage kick in the back and blow on the neck administered simultaneously hurled him headforemost down the stairs. Alighting on the seventh step, he turned a somersault, and bounded like a ball on to the landing below, and there lay stupified. He picked himself up by slow degrees, and glared round with speechless awe and amazement up at the human thunderbolt, that had shot out on him and sent him flying like a feather. He shook his fist, and limped silently away all bruises and curses, to tell Rooke and concert vengeance. Alfred, trembling still with ire, took Beverley to his room (the boy was as white as a sheet), and encouraged him, and made him wash properly, brushed his hair, dressed him in a decent tweed suit he had outgrown, and taking him under his arm, and walking with his own nose haughtily in the air, paraded him up and down the asylum, to show them all the best man in the house respected the poor soft gentleman. Ah what a grand thing it is to be young! Beverley clung to his protector too much like a girl, but walked gracefully and kept step, and every now and then looked up at Alfred with a loving adora-

tion, that was sweet yet sad to see. Alfred marched him to Mrs. Archbold, and told his tale; for he knew Hayes would misrepresent it, and get him into trouble. She smiled on the pair; gently deplored her favourite's impetuosity, entreated him not to go fighting with that great monster Rooke, and charmed him by saying, "Well, and Frank *is* a gentleman, when he is dressed like one."

"Isn't he," said Alfred eagerly. "And whose fault is it he is not always dressed like one? Whose fault that here's an earl's nephew Boots in Hell?"

"Not yours, Alfred, nor mine," was the honeyed reply.

In vain did Mr. Hayes prefer his complaint to Dr. Wolf. The Archbold had been before him, and the answer was, "Served you right."

These and many other good deeds did Alfred Hardie in Drayton House. But, as the days rolled on, and no answer came from the Commissioners, his own anxiety, grief, and dismay, left him less and less able to sympathise with the material but smaller wrongs around him. He became silent, dejected.

At last he came to Mrs. Archbold, and said sternly his letters to the Commissioners were intercepted.

"I can't believe that," she said. "It is against the law."

So it was: but law and custom are two.

"I am sure of it," said he; "and may the eternal curse of Heaven light on the cowardly traitor and miscreant who has done it." And he stalked gloomily away.

When he left her, she sighed at this imprecation from his lips; but did not repent. "I *can't* part with

him," she said despairingly; "and, if I did not stop his poor dear letters, Wolf would:" and the amorous crocodile shed a tear, and persisted in her double-faced course.

By-and-by, when she saw him getting thinner and paler, and his bright face downcast and inexpressibly sad, she shared his misery; ay, shed scalding tears for him; yet could not give him up; for her will was as strong as the rest of her was supple: and hers was hot love, but not true love like Julia's.

Perhaps a very subtle observer seeing this man and woman wax pale and spiritless together in one house, might have divined her secret. Dr. Wolf then was no such observer, for she made him believe she had a rising penchant for him. He really had a strong one for her.

While Alfred's visible misery pulled at her heart-strings, and sometimes irritated, sometimes melted her, came curious complications; one of which requires preface.

Mrs. Dodd then was not the wife to trust blindly where her poor husband was concerned; she bribed so well that a keeperess in David's first asylum told her David had been harshly used by an attendant. She instantly got Eve Dodd to take him away: and transfer him to a small asylum nearer London, and kept by a Mrs. Ellis. "Women are not cruel to men," said the sagacious Lucy Dodd.

But, alas! if women are not cruel where sex comes in and mimics that wider sentiment, Humanity, women are deadly economical. Largely gifted with that household virtue, Mrs. Ellis kept too few servants, and, sure

consequence in a madhouse, too many strait-jackets, hobbles, muffs, leg-locks, body-belts, &c. &c. Hence half her patients were frequently kept out of harm's way by cruel restraints administered not out of hearty cruelty, but female parsimony. Mrs. and Miss Dodd invaded the house one day when the fair economist was out, and found seven patients out of the twelve kept out of the mischief thus: one in a restraint chair, two hobbled like asses, two chained like dogs, and two in strait-waistcoats, and fastened to beds by webbing and straps; amongst the latter David, though quiet as a lamb.

Mrs. Dodd cried over him as if her heart would break, and made Miss Dodd shift him to a large asylum, where I believe he was very well used. But here those dreadful newspapers interfered; a prying into sweet secluded spots. They diversified Mrs. Dodd's breakfast by informing her that the doctor of this asylum had just killed a patient; the mode of execution bloodless and sure, as became fair science. It was a man between sixty and seventy; an age at which the heart can seldom stand very much shocking, or lowering, especially where the brain is diseased. So they placed him in a shower-bath, narrow enough to impede respiration, without the falling water, which of necessity drives out air. In short, a vertical box with holes all round the top.

Here the doctor ordered him a cold shower-bath of unparalleled duration; half an hour. To be followed by an unprecedented dose of tartar emetic. This double-barrelled order given, the doctor went away. (Formula.)

The water was down to forty-five degrees Fahren-

heit. Half an hour's shower-bath at that temperature in a roomy bath would kill the youngest and strongest man in her Majesty's dominions.

For eight-and-twenty mortal minutes the poor old man stood in this vertical coffin under this cold cascade. Six hundred gallons of icy water were in that his last hour, his last half-hour, discharged upon his devoted head and doomed body.

He had to be helped away from this death-torrent he had walked into in high spirits, poor soul.

Even this change awakened no misgivings, no remorse; though you or I, or any man or woman picked at hazard out of the streets, would at once have seen that he was dying, he was duly dosed by the fire with four spoonfuls of antimonial tincture — to make sicker. But even the "Destructive Art of Healing" cannot slay the slain. The old man cheated the emetic; for, before it could hurt him, he died of the bath; and his body told its own sad tale; to use the words of a medical eye-witness, it was "A PIECE OF ALABASTER." The death-torrent had driven the whole circulation from the surface.*

Mrs. Dodd was terrified, and, in spite of Sampson's assurance that this was the asylum of all others they

* This mode of execution is well known in the United States. They settle refractory prisoners with it periodically. But half an hour is not needed; twenty minutes will do the trick. Harper's Weekly, a year or two ago, contained an admirable woodcut of a negro's execution by water. In this remarkable picture you see the poor darkie seated powerless, howling and panting his life away under the deadly cascade: and there stands the stolid turnkey, erect, formal, stiff as a ramrod, pulling the deadly string with a sort of drill exercise air, and no more compunction nor reflection, than if he himself was a machine constructed to pull strings or triggers on his own string being pulled by butcher or fool. A picture well studied, and so worth study.

would not settle another patient in until the matter should have blown over, got Eve Dodd to write to Dr. Wolf, and offer 300*l.* a year if he would take David at once, and treat him with especial consideration.

He showed this letter triumphantly to Mrs. Archbold, and she, blinded for a moment by feeling, dissuaded him from receiving Captain Dodd. He stared at her. "What, turn away a couple of thousand pounds?"

"But they will come to visit him; and perhaps see *him*."

"Oh, that can be managed. You must be on your guard: and I'll warn Rooke. I can't turn away money on a chance."

One day Alfred found himself locked into his room. This was unusual: for, though they called him a lunatic in words, they called him sane by all their acts. He half suspected that the Commissioners were in the house.

Had he known who really was in the house, he would have beaten himself to pieces against the door.

At dinner there was a new patient, very mild and silent, with a beautiful large brown eye, like some gentle animal's.

Alfred was very much struck with this eye, and contrived to say a kind word to him after dinner. Finding himself addressed by a gentleman, the new comer handled his forelock, and made a sea scrape, and announced himself as William Thompson; he added with simple pride, "Able Seaman;" then, touching his forelock again, "Just come aboard, your honour." After this, which came off glibly, he was anything but

communicative. However, Alfred contrived to extract from him that he was rather glad to leave his last ship, on account of having been constantly impeded there in his duties by a set of lubbers, that clung round him and kept him on deck whenever the first lieutenant ordered him into the top.

The very next day, pacing sadly the dull gravel of his prison yard, Alfred heard a row; and there was the able seaman struggling with the Robin and two other keepers: he wanted to go to his duties in the foretop: to wit the fork of a high elm-tree in the court-yard. Alfred had half a mind not to interfere. "Who cares for *my* misery?" he said. But his better nature prevailed, and he told the Robin he was sure going up imaginary rigging would do Thompson more good than harm.

On this the men reluctantly gave him a trial, and he went up the tree with wonderful strength and agility, but evident caution. Still Alfred quaked when he crossed his thighs tight over a limb of the tree forty feet from earth, and went carefully and minutely through the whole process of furling imaginary sails. However, he came down manifestly soothed by the performance, and, singular phenomenon, he was quite cool; and it was the spectators on deck who perspired.

"And what a pleasant voice he has," said Alfred; "it quite charms my ear: it is not like a mad voice. It is like — I'm mad myself."

"And he has got a fiddle, and plays it like a hangel, by all accounts," said the Robin; "only he won't touch it but when he has a mind."

At night Alfred dreamed he heard Julia's sweet, mellow voice speaking to him; and he looked, and lo!

it was the able seaman. He could sleep no more, but lay sighing.

Ere the able seaman had been there three days, Mrs. Dodd came unexpectedly to see him: and it was with the utmost difficulty Alfred was smuggled out of the way. Mrs. Archbold saw by her loving anxiety these visits would be frequent, and unless Alfred was kept constantly locked up, which was repugnant to her, they would meet some day. She knew there are men who ply the trade of spies, and where to find them; she set one of them to watch Mrs. Dodd's house, and learn her habits, in hopes of getting some clue as to when she might be expected.

Now it so happened that looking for one thing she found another which gave her great hopes and courage. And then the sight of Alfred's misery tried her patience, and then he was beginning half to suspect her of stopping his letters. Passion, impatience, pity, and calculation, all drove her the same road, and led to an extraordinary scene, so impregnated with the genius of the madhouse — a place where the passions run out to the very end of their tether — that I feel little able to describe it; I will try and indicate it.

One fine Sunday afternoon then she asked Alfred languidly would he like to walk in the country.

"Would I like? Ah, don't trifle with a prisoner," said he sorrowfully.

She shook her head. "No, no, it will not be a happy walk; Rooke, who hates you, is to follow us with that terrible mastiff, to pull you down if you try to escape. I could not get Dr. Wolf to consent on any other terms; Alfred, let us give up the idea. I fear your rashness."

"No, no, I won't try to escape — from you. I have not seen a blade of grass this six months."

The accomplished dissembler hesitated, yielded. They passed through the yard and out at the back door, which Alfred had so often looked wistfully at; and by-and-by reached a delicious pasture; a light golden haze streamed across it; Nature never seemed so sweet, so divine, to Alfred before; the sun as bright as midsummer, though not the least hot, the air fresh, yet genial, and perfumed with Liberty and the smaller flowers of earth; Beauty glided rustling by his side, and dark eyes subdued their native fire into softness whenever they turned on him; and scarce fifty yards in the rear hung a bully and a mastiff ready to tear him down if he should break away from beauty's light hand, that rested so timidly on his. He was young, and stout-hearted, and relished his peep of liberty and nature, though blotted by Vulcan and Rooke. He chatted to Mrs. Archbold in good spirits. She answered briefly, and listlessly.

At last she stopped under a young chesnut-tree as if overcome with a sudden reflection, and turning half away from him leaned her head and hand upon a bough and sighed. The attitude was pensive and womanly. He asked her with innocent concern what was the matter; then faintly should he take her home. All her answer was to press his hand with hers that was disengaged, and, instead of sighing, to cry.

The novice in woman's wiles set himself to comfort her — in vain: to question her — in vain at first, but by degrees she allowed him to learn that it was for him she mourned; and so they proceeded on the

old, old plan, the man extorting from the woman bit by bit just so much as she wanted all along to say, and would have poured in a stream if let quite alone.

He drew from his distressed friend that Dr. Wolf for reasons of his own had made special inquiries about the Dodds: that she had fortunately or unfortunately heard of this, and had questioned the person employed, hoping to hear something that might comfort Alfred. "Instead of that," said she, "I find Miss Dodd is like most girls; out of sight is out of mind with her."

"What do you mean?" said Alfred, trembling suddenly.

"Do not ask me. What a weak fool I was to let you see I was unhappy for you."

"The truth is the truth," gasped Alfred: "tell me at once."

"Must I? I am afraid you will hate me; for I should hate any one who told me your faults. Well, then — if I must — Miss Dodd has a beau."

"It is a lie!" cried Alfred furiously.

"I wish it was. But she has two in fact, both of them clergymen: however, one seems the favourite; at least they are engaged to be married; it is Mr. Hurd, the curate of the parish she lives in. By what I hear she is one of the religious ones: so perhaps that has brought the pair to an understanding."

At these words a cold sickness rushed all over Alfred, beginning at his heart. He stood white and stupified a moment: then, in the anguish of his heart, broke out into a great and terrible cry: it was like a young lion wounded with a poisoned shaft.

Then he was silent, and stood stock still, like petrified despair.

Mrs. Archbold was prepared for an outburst: but not of this kind. His anguish was so unlike a woman's that it staggered her. Her good and bad angels, to use an expressive though somewhat too poetical phrase, battled for her. She had an impulse to earn his gratitude for life, to let him out of the asylum ere Julia should be Mrs. Hurd, and even liberty come too late for true love. She looked again at the statue of grief by her side: and burst out crying in earnest.

This was unfortunate. Shallow pity exuding in salt water leaves not enough behind to gush forth in good deeds.

She only tried to undo her own work in part; to comfort him a little with common-places: she told him in a soothing whisper there were other women in the world besides this inconstant girl, others who could love him as he deserved.

He made no answer to all she could say, but just waved his hand once impatiently. Petty consolation seemed to sting him.

Then she began to feel impatient, angry. "How he clings to that fickle girl," she said. "I might as well make love to a stone."

Then they stood both of them apart in sombre silence a while.

Her mood changed; she moved noiselessly towards him, and, standing half behind him, laid her hand softly on his shoulder, and poured hot passion in his ear. "Alfred," she murmured, "we are both unhappy; let us comfort one another. I had pity on you at Silverton House, I pity you now; pity *me* a little in

turn; take me out of this dreadful house, out of this revolting life, and let me be with you. Let me be your housekeeper, your servant, your slave. This news that has shocked you so has torn the veil from my eyes; I thought I had cooled my love down to friendship and tender esteem; but no, now I see you as unhappy as myself, now I can speak and wrong no one, I own I — oh Alfred my heart burns for you, bleeds for you, yearns for you, sickens for you, dies for you."

"Oh, hush! hush! Mrs. Archbold. You are saying things you will blush for the next moment."

"I blush now, but cannot hush; I have gone too far. And your happiness as well as mine is at stake. No young girl can understand or value such a man as you are; but I, like you, have suffered; I, like you, am constant; I like you, am warm and tender; at my age a woman's love is bliss to him who can gain it; and I love you with all my soul, Alfred; I worship the ground you walk on, my sweet, sweet boy. Say you the word, dearest, and I will bribe the servants, and get the keys, and sacrifice my profession for ever to give you liberty (see how sweet the open face of nature is, sweeter than anything on earth, but love); and all I ask is a little, little of your heart in return. Give me a chance to make you mine for ever; and, if I fail, treat me as I shall deserve; desert me at once; and then I'll never reproach you; I'll only die for you; as I have lived for you ever since I first saw your heavenly face."

The passionate woman paused at last, but her hot cheek and heaving bosom and tender convulsive hand prolonged the pleading.

I am afraid few men of her own age would have resisted her, for voice and speech and all were burning, melting, and winning: and then, so reasonable, lads; she did not stipulate for constancy.

But Alfred turned round to her blushing and sorrowful. "For shame!" he said; "this is not love: you abuse that sacred word. Indeed, if you had ever really loved, you would have pitied me and Julia long ago, and respected our love; and saved us by giving me my freedom long ago. I am not a fool: do you think I don't know that you are my jailer, and the cunningest and most dangerous of them all?"

"You ungrateful wretch," she sobbed.

"No; I am not ungrateful either," said he, more gently. "You have always come between me and that kind of torture which most terrifies vulgar souls; and I thank you for it. Only, if you had also pitied the deeper anguish of my heart, I should thank you more still. As it is, I forgive you for the share you have had in blasting my happiness for life; and nobody shall ever know what you have been mad enough in an unguarded moment to say; but for pity's sake talk no more of love, to mock my misery."

Mrs. Archbold was white with ire long before he had done this sentence. "You insolent creature," said she; "you spurn my love; you shall feel my hate."

"So I conclude," said he, coldly: "such love as yours is hard by hate."

"It is," said she, "and I know how I'll combine the two. To-day I loved you, and you spurned me; ere long you shall love me and I'll despise you; and not spurn you."

"I don't understand you," said Alfred, feeling rather uneasy.

"What," said she, "don't you see how the superior mind can fascinate the inferior? Look at Frank Beverley; how he follows you about and fawns on you, like a little dog."

"I prefer his sort of affection to yours."

"A gentleman and a man would have kept that to himself; but you are neither one nor the other; or you would have taken my offer, and then run away from me the next day, you fool. A man betrays a woman; he doesn't insult her. Ah, you admire Frank's affection; well, you shall imitate it. You couldn't love me like a man; you shall love me like a dog."

"How will you manage that, pray?" he inquired with a sneer.

"I'll drive you mad."

She hissed this fiendish threat out between her white teeth.

"Ay, sir," she said, "hitherto your reason has only encountered men. You shall see now what an insulted woman can do. A lunatic you shall be ere long, and then I'll make you love me, dote on me, follow me about for a smile: and then I'll leave off hating you, and love you once more, but not the way I did five minutes ago."

At this furious threat Alfred ground his teeth, and said: "Then I give you my honour that the moment I see my reason the least shaken, I'll kill *you:* and so save myself from the degradation of being your lover on any terms."

"Threaten your own sex with that," said the

Archbold, contemptuously; "you may kill me whenever you like; and the sooner the better. Only, if you don't do it very quickly, you shall be my property; my brain-sick, love-sick, slave."

CHAPTER IV.

After a defiance so bitter and deadly, Alfred naturally drew away from his inamorata. But she, boiling with love and hate, said bitterly, "We need not take Mr. Rooke into our secrets. Come, sir, your arm!"

He stuck it out ungraciously, and averted his head; she took it, suppressed with difficulty a petty desire to pinch, and so walked by his side; he was as much at his ease as if promenading jungles with a panther. She felt him quiver with repugnance under her soft hand; and prolonged the irritating contact. She walked very slowly, and told him with much meaning she was waiting for a signal. "Till then," said she, "we will keep one another company;" biting the word with her teeth as it went out.

By-and-by a window was opened in the asylum, and a table-cloth hung out. Mrs. Archbold pointed it out to Alfred; he stared at it; and after that she walked him rapidly home in silence. But, as soon as the door was double-locked on him, she whispered triumphantly in his ear:

"Your mother-in-law was expected to-day; that signal was to let me know she was gone."

"My mother-in-law!" cried the young man, and tried in vain to conceal his surprise and agitation.

"Ay; your mother-in-law, that shall never be: Mrs. Dodd."

"Mrs. Dodd here!" said Alfred, clasping his hands. Then he reflected, and said coolly: "It is false; what should she come here for?"

"To see your father-in-law."

"My father-in-law? What, is he here, too?" said Alfred, with an incredulous sneer.

"Yes, the raving maniac that calls himself Thompson, and that you took to from the first: he is your precious father-in-law — that shall never be."

Alfred was now utterly amazed, and bewildered. Mrs. Archbold eyed him in silent scorn.

"Poor man," said he, at last; and hung his head sorrowfully. "No wonder then his voice went so to my heart. How strange it all is? and how will it all end?"

"In your being a madman instead of an insolent fool," hissed the viper.

At this moment Beverley appeared at the end of the yard. Mrs. Archbold whistled him to her like a dog. He came running zealously. "Who was that called while I was out?" she inquired.

"A polite lady, madam: she said sir to me, and thanked me."

"That sounds like Mrs. Dodd," said the Archbold, quietly.

"Ah, but," continued Frank, "there was another with her: a beautiful young lady; oh, so beautiful!"

"Miss Julia Dodd," said the Archbold grimly.

Alfred panted, and his eyes roved wildly in search of a way to escape and follow her; she could not be *far off.*

"Anybody else, Frank?" inquired Mrs. Archbold.

"No more ladies, madam; but there was a young gentleman all in black; I think he was a clergyman; or a butler."

"Ah, that was her husband that is to be; that was Mr. Hurd. She can go nowhere without him, not even to see her old beau."

At these words, every one of them an adder, Alfred turned on her furiously, and his long arm shot out of its own accord, and the fingers opened like an eagle's claw. She saw, and understood, but never blenched. Her vindictive eye met his dilating flashing orbs unflinchingly.

"You pass for a woman," he said, "and I am too wretched for anger." He turned from her with a deep convulsive sob, and, almost staggering, leaned his brow against the wall of the house.

She had done what no man had as yet succeeded in; she had broken his spirit. And here a man would have left him alone. But the rejected beauty put her lips to his ear, and whispered into them: "This is only the beginning." Then she left him, and went to his room and stole all his paper, and pens, and ink, and his very Aristotle. He was to have no occupation now, except to brood, and brood, and brood.

As for Alfred, he sat down upon a bench in the yard, a broken man: up to this moment he had hoped his Julia was as constant as himself. But no; either she had heard he was mad, and with the universal credulity had believed it, or perhaps not hearing from him at all, believed herself forsaken; and was consoling herself with a clergyman. Jealousy did not as yet infuriate Alfred. Its first effect resembled that of a

heavy blow. Little Beverley found him actually sick, and ran to the Robin. The ex-prizefighter brought him a thimbleful of brandy: but he would not take it. "Ah no, my friends," he said, "that cannot cure me; it is not my stomach; it is my heart. Broken! broken!"

The Robin retired muttering. Little Beverley kneeled down beside him, and kissed his hand with a devotion that savoured of the canine. Yet it was tender, and the sinking heart clung to it. "Oh, Frank!" he cried, "my Julia believes me mad, or thinks me false, or something, and she will marry another before I can get out to tell her all I have endured was for loving her. What shall I do? God protect my reason! What will become of me?"

He moaned, and young Frank sorrowed over him, till the harsh voice of Rooke summoned him to some menial duty. This discharged, he came running back; and sat on the bench beside his crushed benefactor without saying a word. At last he delivered this sapient speech: "I see. You want to get out of this place."

Alfred only sighed hopelessly.

"Then I must try and get you out," said Frank. Alfred shook his head.

"Just let me think," said Frank, solemnly; and he sat silent looking like a young owl: for thinking soon puzzled him, and elicited his intellectual weakness; whereas in a groove of duties he could go as smoothly as half the world, and but for his official, officious, Protector, might just as well have been Boots at the Swan, as Boots and Chambermaid at the Wolf.

So now force and cunning had declared war on Alfred, and feebleness in person enlisted in his defence. His adversary lost no time; that afternoon Rooke told him he was henceforth to occupy a double-bedded room with another patient.

"If he should be violent in the middle of the night, sing out, and we will come, if we hear you," said the keeper with a malicious smile.

The patient turned out to be the able seaman. Here Mrs. Archbold aimed a double stroke; to shake Alfred's nerves, and show him how very mad his proposed father-in-law was. She thought that, if he could once be forced to realise this, it might reconcile him to not marrying the daughter.

The first night David did get up and paraded an imaginary deck for four mortal hours. Alfred's sleep was broken; but he said nothing; and David turned in again, his watch completed.

Not a day passed now but a blow was struck. Nor was the victim passive; debarred writing materials, he cut the rims off several copies of the Times, and secreted them: then catching sight of some ink-blots on the back of Frank's clothes-brush, scraped them carefully off, melted them in a very little water, and with a toothpick scrawled his wrongs to the Commissioners; he rolled the slips rounds a half-crown, and wrote outside, "Good Christian, keep this half-crown, and take the writing to the Lunacy Commissioners at Whitehall, for pity's sake." This done, he watched, and, when nobody was looking, flung his letter, so weighted, over the gates: he heard it fall on the public road.

Another day he secreted a spoonful of black currant preserve, diluted it with a little water, and wrote a letter, and threw it into the road as before: another day, hearing the Robin express disgust at the usage to which he was now subjected, he drew him apart, and offered him a hundred pounds to get him out. Now the ex-prizefighter was rather a tender-hearted fellow, and a great detester of foul play. What he saw made him now side heartily with Alfred; and all he wanted was to be indemnified for his risk.

He looked down and said, "You see, sir, I have a wife and child to think of."

Alfred offered him a hundred pounds.

"That is more than enough, sir," said the Robin; "but you see I can't do it alone. I must have a pal in it. Could you afford as much to Garrett? He is the likeliest; I've heard him say as much as that he was sick of the business."

Alfred jumped at the proposal: he would give them a hundred apiece.

"I'll sound him," said the Robin; "don't you speak to him, whatever. He might blow the gaff. I must begin by making him drunk: then he'll tell me his real mind."

One fine morning the house was made much cleaner than usual; the rotatory chair, in which they used to spin a maniac like a teetotum, the restraint chairs, and all the paraphernalia, were sent into the stable, and so disposed that, even if found, they would look like things scorned and dismissed from service: for Wolf, mind you, professed the non-restraint system.

Alfred asked what was up, and found all this was in preparation for the quarterly visit of the Commis-

sioners; a visit intended to be a surprise; but Drayton House always knew when they were coming, and the very names of the two thunderbolts that thought to surprise them.

Mrs. Archbold communicated her knowledge in off-hand terms. "It is only two old women; Bartlett and Terry."

The gentlemen thus flatteringly heralded arrived next day. One an aged, infirm man, with a grand benevolent head, bald front and silver hair, and the gold-headed cane of his youth, now a dignified crutch; the other an ordinary looking little chap enough: with this merit; he was what he looked. They had a long interview with Mrs. Archbold first, for fear they should carry a naked eye into the asylum; Mr. Bartlett, acting on instructions, very soon inquired about Alfred; Mrs. Archbold's face put on friendly concern directly. "I am sorry to say he is not so well as he was a fortnight ago; not nearly so well. We have given him walks in the country, too; but I regret to say they did him no real good; he came back much excited, and now he shuns the other patients, which he used not to do." In short she gave them the impression that Alfred was a moping melancholiac.

"Well, I had better see him," said Mr. Bartlett, "just to satisfy the Board."

Alfred was accordingly sent for, and asked with an indifferent air how he was.

He said he was very well in health, but in sore distress of mind at his letters to the Commissioners being intercepted by Mrs. Archbold or Dr. Wolf.

Mrs. Archbold smiled pityingly. Mr. Bartlett caught

her glance, and concluded this was one of the patient's delusions. (Formula.)

Alfred surprised the glances, and said, "You can hardly believe this, because the act is illegal. But a great many illegal acts, that you never detect, are done in asylums. However, it is not a question of surmise; I sent four letters in the regular way since I came. Here are their several dates. Pray make a note to inquire whether they have reached Whitehall or not."

"Oh, certainly, to oblige you," said Mr. Bartlett, and made the note.

Mrs. Archbold looked rather discomposed at that.

"And now, gentlemen," said Alfred, "since Mrs. Archbold has had a private interview, which I see she has abused to poison your mind against me, I claim as simple justice a private interview to disabuse you."

"You are the first patient ever told me to walk out of my own drawing-room," said Mrs. Archbold, rising white with ire and apprehension, and sweeping out of the room.

By this piece of female petulance she gave the enemy a point in the game; for, if she had insisted on staying, Mr. Bartlett was far too weak to have dismissed her. As it was, he felt shocked at Alfred's rudeness: and so small a thing as justice did not in his idea counterbalance so great a thing as discourtesy; so he listened to Alfred's tale with the deadly apathy of an unwilling hearer. "Pour on: I will endure," as poor Lear says.

As for Dr. Terry, he was pictorial, but null; effete; emptied of brains by all-scooping Time. If he had been detained that day at Drayton House, and Frank

Beverley sent back in his place to Whitehall, it would have mattered little to him, less to the nation, and nothing to mankind.

At last Mr. Bartlett gave Alfred some hopes he was taking in the truth; for he tore a leaf out of his memorandum-book, wrote on it, and passed it to Dr. Terry. The ancient took it with a smile, and seemed to make an effort to master it, but failed; it dropped simultaneously from his finger and his mind.

Not a question was put to Alfred; so he was fain to come to an end; he withdrew suddenly, and caught Mrs. Archbold at the keyhole. "Noble adversary!" said he, and stalked away, and hid himself hard by: and no sooner did the inspectors come out, and leave the coast clear, than he darted in and looked for the paper Mr. Bartlett had passed to Dr. Terry.

He found it on the floor: and took it eagerly up; and full of hope, and expectation, read these words:

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE STUFF THE MATRON'S GOWN IS MADE OF? I SHOULD LIKE TO BUY MRS. BARTLETT ONE LIKE IT.

Alfred stood and read this again, and again: he searched for some hidden symbolical meaning in the words. High-minded, and deeply impressed with his own wrongs, he could not conceive a respectable man, paid fifteen hundred a year to spy out wrongs, being so heartless hard as to write this single comment during the earnest recital of a wrong so gigantic as his. Poor Alfred learned this to his cost, that to put small men into great places is to create monsters. When he had realised the bitter truth, he put the stony-hearted paper in his pocket, crept into the yard,

and sat down, and, for all he could do, scalding tears ran down his cheeks.

"Homunculi quanti sunt!" he sobbed; "homunculi quanti sunt!"

Presently he saw Dr. Terry come wandering towards him alone. The Archbold had not deigned to make him safe; senectude had done that. Alfred, all heart-sick as he was, went to the old gentleman out of veneration for the outside of his head — which was Shakespearian — and pity for his bodily infirmity; and offered him an arm. The doctor thanked him sweetly, and said, "Pray young man have you anything to communicate?"

Then Alfred saw that the ancient man had already forgotten his face, and so looking at him with that rare instrument of official inspection, the naked eye, had seen he was sane; and consequently taken him for a keeper.

How swiftly the mind can roam, and from what a distance gather the materials of a thought! Flashed like lightning through Alfred's mind this line from one of his pets, the Greek philosophers:

Και τουτο μεγιστης εστι τεχνης αγαθα ποιειν τα κακα.

"And this is the greatest stroke of art, to turn an evil into a good."

Now the feebleness of this aged Inspector was an evil: the thing then was to turn into a good. Shade of Plato behold how thy disciple worked thee! "Sir," said he, sinking his voice mysteriously, "I have: but I am a poor man; you won't say I told you: it's as much as my place is worth."

"Confidence, strict confidence," replied Nestor,

going over beaten tracks; for he had kept many a queer secret with the loyalty which does his profession so much honour.

"Then, sir, there's a young gentleman confined here, who is no more mad than you and I; and never was mad."

"You don't say so."

"That I do, sir: and they know they are doing wrong, sir: for they stop all his letters to the Commissioners; and that is unlawful, you know. Would you like to take a note of it all, sir?"

The old fogie said he thought he should, and groped vaguely for his note-book: he extracted it at last like a loose tooth, fumbled with it, and dropped it: Alfred picket it up fuming inwardly.

The ancient went to write, but his fingers were weak and hesitating, and by this time he had half forgotten what he was going to say. Alfred's voice quavered with impatience; but he fought it down, and offered as coolly as he could to write it for him: the offer was accepted, and he wrote down in a feigned hand, very clear,

"Drayton House, Oct. 5. A sane patient, Alfred Hardie, confined here from interested motives. Has written four letters to the Commissioners, all believed to be intercepted. Communicated to me in confidence by an attendant in the house. Refer to the party himself, and his correspondence with the Commissioners from Dr. Wycherley's: also to Thomas Wales, another attendant; and to Dr. Wycherley: also to Dr. Eskell and Mr. Abbott, Commissioners of Lunacy."

After this stroke of address Alfred took the first opportunity of leaving him, and sent Frank Beverley to him.

Thus Alfred, alarmed by the hatred of Mrs. Archbold, and racked with jealousy, exerted all his intelligence and played many cards for liberty. One he kept in reserve; and a trump card too. Having now no ink nor colouring matter, he did not hesitate, but out penknife, up sleeve, and drew blood from his arm, and with it wrote once more to the Commissioners, but kept this letter hidden for an ingenious purpose. What that was my reader shall divine.

CHAPTER V.

We left Julia Dodd a district visitor. Working in a dense parish she learned the depths of human misery, bodily and mental.

She visited an honest widow, so poor that she could not afford a farthing dip, but sat in the dark. When friends came to see her they sometimes brought a candle to talk by.

She visited a cripple who often thanked God sincerely for leaving her the use of one thumb.

She visited a poor creature who for sixteen years had been afflicted with a tumour in the neck, and had lain all those years on her back with her head in a plate; the heat of a pillow being intolerable. Julia found her longing to go, and yet content to stay: and praising God in all the lulls of that pain, which was her companion day and night.

But were I to enumerate the ghastly sights, the stifling loathsome odours, tho vulgar horrors upon horrors this refined young lady faced, few of my readers would endure on paper for love of truth, what

she endured in reality for love of suffering humanity, and of Him whose servant she aspired to be.

Probably such sacrifices of selfish ease and comfort are never quite in vain; they tend in many ways to heal our own wounds: I won't say that bodily suffering is worse than mental; but it is realised far more vividly by a spectator. The grim heart-breaking sights she saw arrayed Julia's conscience against her own grief; the more so when she found some of her most afflicted ones resigned, and even grateful. "What," said she, "can they, all rags, disease, and suffering, bow so cheerfully to the will of Heaven, and have I the wickedness, the impudence, to repine?"

And then, happier than most district visitors, she was not always obliged to look on helpless, or to confine her consolations to good words. Mrs. Dodd was getting on famously in her groove. She was high in the confidence of Cross and Co., and was inspecting eighty ladies, as well as working; her salary and profits together were not less than five hundred pounds a year, and her one luxury was charity, and Julia its minister. She carried a good honest basket, and there you might see her Bible wedged in with wine, and meat, and tea and sugar: and still, as these melted in her round, a little spark of something warm would sometimes come in her own sick heart. Thus by degrees she was attaining, not earthly happiness, but a grave and pensive composure.

Yet across it gusts of earthly grief came sweeping often; but these she hid till she was herself again.

To her mother and brother she was kinder, sweeter, and dearer if possible, than ever. They looked on her as a saint; but she knew better; and used to blush

with honest shame when they called her so. "Oh don't, pray don't," she would say with unaffected pain. "Love me as if I was an angel; but do not praise me; that turns my eyes inward and makes me see myself. I am not a Christian yet, nor anything like one."

Returning one day from her duties very tired, she sat down to take off her bonnet in her own room, and presently heard snatches of an argument, that made her prick those wonderful little ears of hers which could almost hear through a wall. The two concluding sentences were a key to the whole dialogue.

"Why disturb her?" said Mrs. Dodd. "She is getting better of 'the Wretch;' and my advice is, say nothing: what harm can that do?"

"But then it is so unfair, so ungenerous, to keep anything from the poor girl that may concern her."

At this moment Julia came softly into the room with her curiosity hidden under an air of angelic composure.

Her mother asked after Mrs. Beecher, to draw her into conversation. She replied quietly that Mrs. Beecher was no better, but very thankful for the wine Mrs. Dodd had sent her. This answer given, she went without any apparent hurry and sat by Edward, and fixed two loving imploring eyes on him in silence. O, subtle sex! This feather was to turn the scale, and made him talk unquestioned. It told. She was close to him too, and mamma at the end of the room.

"Look here, Ju," said he, putting his hands in his pockets, "we two have always been friends as well as brother and sister; and somehow it does not seem like a friend to keep things dark:" then to Mrs. Dodd: "She is not a child, mother, after all; and how can it

be wrong to tell her the truth, or right to suppress the truth? Well then, Ju, there's an advertisement in the 'Tiser, and it's a regular riddle. Now mind, I don't really think there is anything in it; but it is a droll coincidence, very droll; if it wasn't there are ladies present, and one of them a district visitor, I would say, d—d droll. So droll," continued he, getting warm, "that I should like to punch the advertiser's head."

"Let me see it, dear," said Julia. "I dare say it it nothing worth punching about."

"There," said Edward. "I've marked it."

Julia took the paper, and her eye fell on this short advertisement:

AILEEN AROON. — DISTRUST APPEARANCES.

Looking at her with some anxiety, they saw the paper give one sharp rustle in her hands, and then quiver a little. She bowed her head over it, and everything seemed to swim. But she never moved: they could neither of them see her face, she defended herself with the paper. The letters cleared again, and, still hiding her face, she studied and studied the advertisement.

"Come, tell us what you think of it," said Edward. "Is it anything? or a mere coincidence?"

"It is a pure coincidence," said Mrs. Dodd, with an admirable imitation of cool confidence.

Julia said nothing; but she now rose and put both arms round Edward's neck, and kissed him fervidly again and again, holding the newspaper tight all the time.

"There," said Mrs. Dodd: "see what you have done."

"Oh, it is all right," said Edward cheerfully. "The British fireman is getting hugged no end. Why what is the matter? have you got the hiccough, Ju?"

"No; no! You are a true brother. I knew all along that he would explain all if he was alive: and he *is* alive." So saying she kissed the 'Tiser violently more than once; then fluttered away with it to her own room ashamed to show her joy, and yet not able to hide it.

Mrs. Dodd shook her head sorrowfully: and Edward began to look rueful and doubt whether he had done wisely. I omit the discussion that followed. But the next time his duties permitted him to visit them Mrs. Dodd showed him the 'Tiser in her turn, and with her pretty white taper finger pointed grimly to the following advertisement:

> AILEEN AROON. — I *do* DISTRUST APPEARANCES. But if you ever loved me explain them at once. I have something for you from your dear sister.

"Poor simple girl," said Mrs. Dodd, "not to see that, if he could explain at all, he *would* explain, not go advertising an enigma after acting a mystification. And to think of my innocent dove putting in that she had something for him from his sister; a mighty temptation to such a wretch!"

"It was wonderfully silly," said Edward; "and such a clever girl, too; but you ladies can't stick to one thing at a time; begging your pardon, mamma."

Mrs. Dodd took no notice of this remark.

"To see her lower herself so!" she said, "O my son, I am mortified." And Mrs. Dodd leaned her cheek against Edward's, and sighed.

"Now don't you cry, mammy," said he, sorrowfully. "I'll break every bone in his skin, for your comfort."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Mrs. Dodd anxiously; "what, are you not aware she would hate you?"

"Hate me! her brother!"

"She would hate us all if we laid a finger on that wretch. Pray interfere no more, love; foolish child, talking to me about women, and it is plain you know nothing of their hearts: and a good thing *for* you." She then put on maternal authority (nobody could do it more easily) and solemnly forbade all violence.

He did not venture to contradict her now; but cherished his resolution all the more, and longed for the hour when he might take "the Wretch" by the throat, and chastise him, the more publicly the better.

Now, the above incident that revealed Julia's real heart, which she had been hiding more or less all this time from those who could not sympathise with her, took eventually a turn unfavourable to "the Wretch." So he might well be called. Her great and settled fear had always been that Alfred was dead. Under the immediate influence of his father's cunning, she had for a moment believed he was false; but so true and loving a heart could not rest in that opinion. In true love, so long as there is one grain of uncertainty, there is a world of faith and credulous ingenuity. So, as Alfred had never been seen since, as nobody could say he was married to another, there was a grain of

uncertainty as to his unfaithfulness, and this her true heart magnified to a mountain.

But now matters wore another face. She was sure he had written the advertisement. Who but he, out of the few that take the words of any song to heart, admired Aileen Aroon? Who but he out of the three or four people who might possibly care for that old song, had appearances to explain away? and who but he knew they took in the Morning Advertiser? She waited then for the explanation she had invited. She read the advertising column every day over and over.

Not a word more.

Then her womanly pride was deeply wounded. What; had she courted an explanation where most ladies would have listened to none; and courted it in vain!

Her high spirit revolted. Her heart swelled against the repeated insults she had received: this last one filled the bitter cup too high.

And then her mother came in and assured her he had only inserted that advertisement to keep her in his power. He has heard you are recovering, and are admired by others more worthy of your esteem.

Julia cried bitterly at these arguments, for she could no longer combat them.

And Mr. Hurd was very attentive and kind. And when he spoke to Julia, and Julia turned away, her eye was sure to meet Mrs. Dodd's eye imploring her secretly not to discourage the young man too much. And so she was gently pulled by one, and gently thrust by another, away from her first lover and towards his successor.

It is an old, old story. Fate seems to exhaust

its malice on our first love. For the second the road is smoother. Matters went on so some weeks, and it was perfectly true that Mr. Hurd escorted both ladies one day to Drayton House, at Julia's request, and not Mrs. Dodd's. Indeed, the latter lady was secretly hurt at his being allowed to come with them.

One Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Dodd went alone to Drayton House by appointment. David was like a lamb, but, as usual, had no knowledge of her. Mrs. Archbold told her a quiet, intelligent, patient had taken a great fancy to him, and she thought this was adding much to his happiness. "May I see him to thank him," asked Mrs. Dodd. "Oh, certainly," said Mrs. Archbold; "I'll inquire for him." She went out, but soon returned, saying, "He is gone out for a walk with the head keeper: we give him as much air and amusement as we can; we hope soon to send him out altogether, cured." "Truly kind and thoughtful," said Mrs. Dodd. Soon after, she kissed Mrs. Archbold, and pressed a valuable brooch upon her: and then took leave. However, at the gate she remembered her parasol. Mrs. Archbold said she would go back for it. Mrs. Dodd would not hear of that: Mrs. Archbold insisted, and settled the question by going. She was no sooner in the house, than young Frank Beverley came running to Mrs. Dodd, and put the missing parasol officiously into her hand. "Oh, thank you, sir," said she; "will you be so kind as to tell Mrs. Archbold I have it." And with this they parted, and the porter opened the gate to her, and she got into her hired cab. She leaned her head back, and, as usual, was

lost in the sorrowful thoughts of what had been, and what now was. Poor wife, each visit to Drayton House opened her wound afresh. On reaching the stones, there was a turnpike. This roused her up: she took out her purse and paid it. As she drew back to her seat, she saw out of the tail of her feminine eye the edge of something white under her parasol. She took up the parasol, and found a written paper pinned on to it: she detached this paper, and examined it all over with considerable curiosity. It consisted of a long slip about an inch and a quarter broad, rolled like tape, and tied with packthread. She could not see the inside, of course, but she read the superscription: it was firmly but clearly written, in red ink apparently.

Of the words I shall only say at present that they were strong and simple, and that their effect on the swift intelligence and tender heart of Mrs. Dodd was overpowering. They knocked at her heart; they drew from her an audible cry of pity more eloquent than a thousand speeches: and the next moment she felt a little faint; for she knew now the appeal was not in red ink, but in something very fit to pass between the heart of woe and the heart of pity. She smelt at her salts, and soon recovered that weakness: and now her womanly bosom swelled so with the milk of human kindness that her breath came short. After a little struggle she gushed out aloud, "Ah, that I will, poor soul; this very moment." Now, by this time she was close to her own house.

She stopped the cab at her door, and asked the driver if his horse was fresh enough to carry her to the Board of Lunacy: "It is at Whitehall, sir," said

she. "Lord bless you, ma'am," said the cabman, "Whitehall? why my mare would take you to Whitechapel and back in an hour, let alone Whitehall."

Reassured on that point Mrs. Dodd went in just to give the servant an order: but as she stood in the passage, she heard her children's voices, and also a friend's; the genial, angry tones of Alexander Sampson, M.D.

She thought, "Oh I *must* just show them all the paper, before I go with it;" and so after a little buzz about dinner and things with Sarah, mounted the stairs, and arrived among them singularly apropos, as it happened.

Men like Sampson, who make many foes, do also make stauncher friends than ever the Hare does, and are faithful friends themselves. The boisterous doctor had stuck to the Dodds in all their distresses; and, if they were ever short of money, it certainly was not his fault: for almost his first word, when he found them in a lodging, was, "Now, ye'll be wanting a Chick. Gimme pen and ink, and I'll just draw ye one; for a hundre." This being declined politely by Mrs. Dodd, he expostulated. "Mai— dear — Madam, how on airth can ye go on in such a place as London without a Chick?"

He returned to the charge at his next visit, and scolded her well for her pride. "Who iver hard of refusing a chick? a small inoffensive chick, from an old friend like me? Come now, behave! Just a wee chick: I'll let y' off for fifty."

"Give us your company and your friendship," said Mrs. Dodd; "we value them above gold: we will not

rob your dear children, while we have as many fingers on our hands as other people."

On the present occasion Dr. Sampson, whose affectionate respect for the leading London physicians has already displayed itself, was inveighing specially against certain specialists, whom, in the rapidity of his lusty eloquence, he called the Mad Ox. He favoured Julia and Edward with a full account of the maniform enormities he had detected them in during thirty years' practice; and so descended to his present grievance. A lady, an old friend of his, was being kept in a certain asylum month after month because she had got money and relations, and had once been delirious. "And why was she delirious? because she had a brain fever: she got well in a fortnight." This lady had thrown a letter over the wall addressed to him; somebody had posted it: he had asked the Commissioners to let him visit her; they had declined for the present. "Yon Board always sides with the strong against the weak," said he. So now he had bribed the gardener, and made a midnight assignation with the patient; and was going to it with six stout fellows to carry her off by force. "That is my recipe for alleged Insanity," said he. "The business will be more like a mejæval knight carrying off a namorous nun out of a convint, than a good physician saving a pashint from the Mad Ox. However, Mrs. Saampson's in the secret; I daunt say sh' approves it; for she doesn't. She says, 'Go quietly to the Board o' Commissioners.' Sis I, 'My dear, Boards are a sort of cattle that go too slow for Saampson, and no match at all for the Mad Ox.'"

At this conjuncture, or soon after, Mrs. Dodd came

in with her paper in her hand, a little flurried for once, and, after a hasty curtsey, said,

"Oh, Doctor Sampson, oh, my dears, what wickedness there is in the world! I'm going to Whitehall this moment; only look at what was pinned on my parasol at Drayton House."

The writing passed from hand to hand, and left the readers looking very gravely at one another. Julia was quite pale and horror-stricken. All were deeply moved, and even shocked, to make any common-place comment; for it looked and read like a cry from heart to hearts.

> *"If you are a Christian, if you are human, pity a sane man here confined by fraud, and take this to the Board of Lunacy at Whitehall. Torn by treachery from her I love, my letters all intercepted, pens and paper kept from me, I write this with a toothpick and my blood on a rim of 'The Times.' Oh God direct it to some one who has suffered, and can feel for another's agony."*

Dr. Sampson was the first to speak. "There," said he, under his breath: "didn't I tell you? This man is sane. There's sanity in every line."

"Well, but," said Edward, "do you mean to say that in the present day —"

"Mai — dearr — sirr. Mankind niver changes. Whativer the muscles of man *can* do in the light, the mind and conscience of man will consent to do in the dark."

Julia said never a word.

Mrs. Dodd, too, was for action not for talk. She bade them all a hasty adieu, and went on her good work.

Ere she got to the street door, she heard a swift rustle behind her; and it was Julia flying down to her, all glowing and sparkling with her old impetuosity, that had seemed dead for ever. "No, no," she cried, panting with generous emotion; "it is to me it was sent. I am torn from him I love, and by some treachery I dare say: and I have suffered, oh you shall never know what I have suffered. Give it *me*, oh pray, pray, pray give it *me*. *I'll* take it to Whitehall."

CHAPTER VI.

If we could always know at the time what we are doing!

Two ladies carried a paper to Whitehall out of charity to a stranger.

Therein the elder was benefactress to a man she never spoke of but as "the Wretch;" the younger held her truant bridegroom's heart, I may say, in her hand all the road, and was his protectress. Neither recognised the handwriting: for no man can write his own hand with a toothpick.

They reached Whitehall, and were conducted upstairs to a gentleman of pleasant aspect but powerful brow, seated in a wilderness of letters. He waved his hand, and a clerk set them chairs: he soon after laid down his pen, and leaned gravely forward to hear their business. They saw they must waste no time; Julia

looked at her mother, rose, and took Alfred's missive to his desk, and handed it him with one of her eloquent looks, grave and pitiful. He seemed struck by her beauty and her manner.

"It was pinned on my parasol, sir, by a poor prisoner at Drayton House," said Mrs. Dodd.

"Oh, indeed," said the gentleman, and began to read the superscription with a cold and wary look. But it thawed visibly as he read. He opened the missive, and ran his eye over it. The perusal moved him not a little: a generous flush mounted to his brow; he rang the bell sharply. A clerk answered it; the gentleman wrote on a slip of paper, and said earnestly, "Bring me every letter that is signed with that name, and all our correspondence about him."

He then turned to Mrs. Dodd, and put her a few questions, which drew out the main facts I have just related. The papers were now brought in. "Excuse me a moment," said he, and ran over them. "I believe the man is sane," said he, "and that you will have enabled us to baffle a conspiracy, a heartless conspiracy."

"We do hope he will be set free, sir," said Mrs. Dodd, piteously.

"He shall, madam, if it is as I suspect. I will stay here all night but I will master this case; and lay it before the Board myself without delay."

Julia looked at her mother, and then asked if it would be wrong to inquire "the poor gentleman's name?"

"Humph!" said the official; "I ought not to reveal that without his consent. But stay! he will owe you much, and it really seems a pity he should not have

an opportunity of expressing his gratitude. Perhaps you will favour me with your address; and trust to my discretion: of course, if he does not turn out as sane as he seems, I shall never let him know it."

Mrs. Dodd then gave her address; and she and Julia went home with a glow about the heart selfish people, thank Heaven, never know.

Unconsciously these two had dealt their enemy and Alfred's a heavy blow; had set the train to a mine. Their friend at the office was a man of another stamp than Alfred had fallen in with.

Meantime Alfred was subjected to hourly mortifications and irritations. He guessed the motive, and tried to baffle it by calm self-possession; but this was far more difficult than heretofore, because his temper was now exacerbated and his fibre irritated by broken sleep (of this poor David was a great cause), and his heart inflamed and poisoned by that cruel, that corroding passion, jealousy.

To think, that while he was in prison, a rival was ever at his Julia's ear, making more and more progress in her heart! This corroder was his bitter companion day and night; and perhaps of all the maddeners human cunning could have invented this was the worst. It made his temples beat and his blood run boiling poison. Indeed, there were times when he was so distempered by passion that homicide seemed but an act of justice, any suicide a legitimate relief. For who could go on for ever carrying Hell in his bosom up and down a prison yard? He began to go alone: to turn impatiently from the petty troubles and fathomless egotism of those afflicted persons he had hitherto

forced his sore heart to pity. Pale, thin, and wo-begone, he walked the weary gravel, like the lost ones in that Hall of Eblis, whose hearts were a devouring fire. Even an inspector, with a naked eye would no longer have distinguished him at first sight from a lunatic of the unhappiest class, the melancholiac.

Ipse suum cor edens hominum vestigia vitans.

Mrs. Archbold looked on and saw this sad sight not with the pity it would once have caused, but with a sort of bitter triumph lightened by no pleasure, and darkened by the shadow of coming remorse. Yet up to this time she had shown none of that inconstancy of purpose which marks her sex; while she did go far to justify the poets charge:

Nor Hell a fury like a woman scorned.

Rooke had a hint to provoke Alfred to violence such as would justify them in subjecting so popular a patient to bodily restraint, composing draughts, and other quick maddeners. Rooke entered into the game zealously from two motives; he was devoted to Mrs. Archbold, and he hated Alfred, who had openly defied him, and mortified his vanity about Frank Beverley.

One Saturday Alfred was ordered out to walk with Rooke and Hayes and Vulcan. He raised no objection; suspected, felt homicidal, suppressed the impulse, and by this self-command he got time to give that letter to Beverley with instructions.

But, all the walk, he was saying to himself that Julia was in the house, and he was kept away from her, and a rival with her; this made him sicken and rage by turns. He came back in a state verging on fury.

On entering the yard poor Beverley, who had done his bit of cunning, and by reaction now relapsed into extra simplicity, came running, and said, "I've done it; she has got it."

"What have you done? Who has got what?"

"Don't tell, Frank."

"If you don't, I'll shake your life out, ye young blackguard," cried Rooke, seizing him and throttling him till he was black in the face.

Alfred's long-pent fury broke out: he gnashed his teeth and dashed his fist in Rooke's face.

Rooke bellowed with pain and anger, and, rushing at him incautiously, received a stinger that staggered him, and nearly closed his right eye. He took the hint, and put himself in a posture that showed he was skilled in the art of self-defence. He stopped two blows neatly, and returned a heavy one upon the ribs. Alfred staggered back some steps, but steadied himself, and, as Rooke rushed in too hastily to improve his advantage, caught him heavily on the other eye, but lost his own balance a little, which enabled Rooke to close; then came a sharp short rally of re-echoing blows, and Rooke, not to be denied, got hold of his man, and a wrestling bout ensued, in which Alfred being somewhat weakened by misery and broken rest, Rooke's great weight and strength enabled him, after a severe struggle, to fall with his antagonist under him, and knock the breath out of his body for the moment. Then Hayes, who had stood prudently aloof, came in and helped handcuff him; they could not walk up and down him for the Robin, who stood by with a professional air to see fair play.

"Ah, cold iron is your best chance," he said satirically.

"Never you mind, sir: you hit quick and well: I'd back you at long odds in the ring: both his peepers are in deep mourning." He added, "A cow can beat a man wrestling."

When Alfred was handcuffed they turned him loose. It soon transpired, however, that he was now a dangerous maniac (Formula), and to be confined in the noise ward.

On hearing this he saw the trap he had fallen into; saw and trembled: he asked himself what on earth he should do; and presently the saying came back to him, "And this is the highest stroke of art to turn evil into good." He argued thus: Wolf's love of money is my great evil: he will destroy me for money, do anything for money. Then suppose I offer him money to be honest. He begged an interview with Dr. Wolf on business. This was accorded at once. He asked the doctor plump whether he received a large sum to detain him under pretence of insanity.

"Not very, considering the trouble you sometimes give, Mr. Hardie," was the dry reply.

"Well, then, Justice shall outbid rascality for once. I am a sane man, and you know it; a man of my word, and you know it. I'll give you a thousand pounds to let me out of this place."

Dr. Wolf's eye sparkled.

"You shall have any bond or security you like; and the money within a week of my deliverance."

Dr. Wolf said he should be delighted to do it, if he could conscientiously.

At this piece of hypocrisy Alfred's cheek reddened, and he could not speak.

"Well, well, I do see a great change in you for

the better," said Dr. Wolf. "If, as I suspect, you are convalescent, I will part with you without a thousand pounds or a thousand pence."

Alfred stared. Had he mistaken his man?

"I'll tell you what, though," said the smooth doctor. "I have got two pictures, one by Raphael, one by Correggio."

"I know them," said the quick-witted Alfred; "they are worth more than a thousand pounds."

"Of course they are, but I would take a thousand pounds from *you*."

"Throw me in my liberty, and I'll make it guineas."

"We will see about that." And with this understanding the men of business parted. Dr. Wolf consulted Mrs. Archbold then and there.

"Impossible," said she, "the law would dissolve such a bargain, and you would be exposed and ruined."

"But a thousand pounds!" said the poor doctor.

"Oh, he offered me more than that," said Mrs. Archbold.

"You don't mean to say so; when was that?"

"Do you remember one Sunday that I walked him out, to keep clear of Mrs. Dodd? Have you not observed that I have not repeated the experiment?"

"Yes. But I really don't know why."

"Will you promise me faithfully not to take any notice if I tell you?"

The doctor promised.

Then she owned to him with manifest reluctance that Alfred had taken advantage of her kindness, her indiscretion, in walking alone with him, and made pas-

sionate love to her. "He offered me not a thousand pounds," said she, "but his whole fortune, and his heart, if I would fly with him from these odious walls; that was his expression."

Then seeing out of a corner of her eye that the doctor was turning almost green with jealousy, this artist proceeded to describe the love-scene between her and Alfred, with feigned hesitation, yet minute detail; only she inverted the parts; Alfred in her glowing page made the hot love; she listened abashed, confused, and tried all she could think of to bring him to better sentiments. She concluded this chapter of history inverted with a sigh, and said, "So now he hates me, I believe, poor fellow."

"Do you regret your refusal?" asked Dr. Wolf uneasily.

"Oh no, my dear friend. Of course my judgment says that few women at my age and in my position would have refused. But we poor women seldom go by our judgments." And she cast a tender look down at the doctor's feet.

In short, she worked on him so, that he left Alfred at her disposition, and was no sooner gone to his other asylum six miles off, than the calumniated was conducted by Hayes and Rooke through passage after passage, and door after door, to a wing of the building connected with the main part only by a covered way. As they neared it, strange noises became audible. Faint at first, they got louder and louder. Singing, roaring, howling like wolves. Alfred's flesh began to creep. He stopped at the covered way: he would have fought to his last gasp sooner than go further; but he was handcuffed. He appealed to the keepers: but he

had used them both too roughly; they snarled and forced him on, and shut him into a common flagged cell, with a filthy truckle-bed in it, and all the vessels of gutta-percha. Here he was surrounded by the desperate order of maniacs he at present scarcely knew but by report. Throughout that awful night he could never close his eyes for the horrible unearthly sounds that assailed him. Singing, swearing, howling like wild beasts! His right-hand neighbour reasoned high of faith and works, ending each pious argument with a sudden rhapsody of oaths, and never slept a wink. His left-hand neighbour alternately sang; and shouted, "Cain was a murderer, Cain was a murderer;" and howled like a wolf, making night hideous. His opposite neighbour had an audience, and every now and then delivered in a high nasal key, "Let us curse and pray;" varying it sometimes thus: "Brethren, let us work double tides." And then he would deliver a long fervent prayer, and follow it up immediately with a torrent of blasphemies so terrific that coming in such a contrast they made Alfred's body wet with perspiration to hear a poor creature so defy his Creator. No rest, no peace. When it was still, the place was like the grave; and ever and anon loud sharp tremendous burst a thunderclap of curses, and set those poor demented creatures all yelling again for half an hour, making the tombs ring. And at clock-like intervals a harmless but dirty idiot, who was allowed to roam the ward, came and chanted through the keyhole, "Everything is nothing, and nothing is everything."

This was the only observation he had made for many years.

His ears assailed with horrors, of which you have

literally no conception, or shadow of a conception, his nose poisoned with ammoniacal vapours, and the peculiar wild-beast smell that marks the true maniac, Alfred ran wildly about his cell trying to stop his ears, and trembling for his own reason. When the fearful night rolled away, and morning broke, and he could stand on his truckle-bed and see God's hoar-frost on a square yard of grass level with his prison bars, it refreshed his very soul, and affected him almost to tears. He was then, to his surprise, taken out, and allowed to have a warm bath and to breakfast with David and the rest; but I suspect it was done to watch the effect of the trial he had been submitted to. After breakfast, having now no place to go, he lay on a bench, and there exhausted nature overpowered him, and he fell fast asleep.

Mrs. Archbold came by on purpose, and saw him. He looked very pale and peaceful. There was a cut on his forehead due to Rooke's knuckles. Mrs. Archbold looked down, and the young figure and haughty face seemed so unresisting and peaceful sad, she half relented. That did not, however, prevent her setting her female spies to watch him more closely than ever.

He awoke cold but refreshed, and found little Beverley standing by him with wet eyes. Alfred smiled and held out his hand like a captive monarch to his faithful vassal. "They shan't put you in the noise ward again," sobbed Frank. "This is your last night here."

"Hy, Frank, you rascal, my boots!" roared Rooke from an open window.

"Coming, sir — coming!"

Alfred's next visitor was the Robin. He came

whispering, "It is all right with Garrett, sir, and he has got a key of the back gate: but you must get back to your old room, or we can't work."

"Would to Heaven I could, Robin; another night or two in the noisy ward will drive me mad, I think."

"Well, sir, I'll tell you what you do: which we all have to do it at odd times: hold a candle to the devil: here she comes: I think she is everywhere all at one time. The Robin then sauntered away, affecting nonchalance: and Alfred proceeded to hold the candle as directed. "Mrs. Archbold," said he timidly, rising from his seat at her approach.

"Sir," said she haughtily, and affecting surprise.

"I have a favour to ask you, madam. Would you be so kind as to let me go back to my room?"

"What, you have found I am not so powerless as you thought!"

"I find myself so weak, and you so powerful, that — you can afford to be generous."

"I have no more power over you than you have over me."

"I wish it was so."

"I'll prove it," said she. "Who has got the key of your room? Hayes?" She whistled, and sent for him; and gave him the requisite order before Alfred. Alfred thanked her warmly.

She smiled, and went away disposed to change her tactics, and, having shown him how she could torment, try soothing means, and open his heart by gratitude.

But presently looking out of her window she saw the Robin and him together; and somehow they seemed to her subtle, observant eyes, to be plotting. The very suspicion was fatal to that officer. His discharge

was determined on. Meantime she set her spies to watch him, and tell her if they saw or heard anything.

Now Mrs. Archbold was going out to tea that evening, and, as soon as ever this transpired, the keepers secretly invited the keeperesses to a party in the first-class patients' drawing-room. This was a rare opportunity, and the Robin and Garrett put their heads together accordingly.

In the dusk of the evening the Robin took an opportunity and slipped a new key of the back gate into Alfred's hand, and told him "the trick was to be done that very night:" he was to get Thompson to go to bed early: and, instead of taking off his clothes, was to wait in readiness. "We have been plying Hayes already," said the Robin, "and, as soon as *she* is off, we shall hocuss him, and get the key; and, while they are all larking in the drawing-room, off you go to Merrimashee."

"Oh, you dear Robin! You have taken my breath away. But how about Vulcan?"

"Oh, we know how to make him amiable: a dog-fancier, a friend of mine, has provided the ondeniable where dogs is concerned; whereby Garrett draws the varmint into the scullery, and shuts him in, while I get the key from the other. *It's* all right."

"Ah, Robin," said Alfred, "it sounds too good to be true. What? this my last day here!"

The minutes seemed to creep very slowly till eight o'clock came. Then he easily persuaded David to go to bed; Hayes went up and unlocked the door for them: it closed with a catch-lock. Hayes was drunk, but full of discipline, and insisted on the patients putting out their clothes; so Alfred made up a bundle for

his portmanteau, and threw it out. Hayes eyed it suspiciously, but was afraid to stoop and inspect it closer; for his drunken instinct told him he would pitch on his head that moment: so he retired grumbling, and dangling his key.

At the end of the corridor he met Mrs. Archbold full dressed, and with a candle in her hand. She held the candle up and inspected him; and a little conversation followed that sobered Mr. Hayes for a minute or two.

Mrs. Archbold was no sooner gone to her little tea-party than all the first-class ladies and gentlemen were sent to bed to get a good sleep for the good of their health, and the keepers and keeperesses took their place and romped, and made such a row sleep was not easy within hearing of them. They sat on the piano, they sang songs to a drum accompaniment played on the table, they danced, drank, flirted, and enjoyed themselves like schoolboys. Hayes alone was gloomy, and morose: so the Robin and Garrett consoled him, drank with him, and soothed him with the balm of insensibility: in which condition they removed him under charitable pretences, and searched his pockets in the passage for the key of Alfred's room.

To their infinite surprise and disappointment it was not upon him.

The fact is, Mrs. Archbold had snatched it from him in her wrath, and put it in her own pocket. How far her suspicions went, how much her spies had discovered, I really don't know; but somehow or other she was uneasy in her mind, and, seeing Hayes in such a state, she would not trust him during her absence, but took the key away with her.

The Robin and Garrett knew nothing of this, and were all abroad; but they thought Rooke must have the key; so they proceeded to drink with him, and were just about to administer a really effective soporific in his grog, when they and all the merry party were suddenly startled by violent ringing at the bell, and thundering and halloaing at the hall door. The men jumped to their feet and balanced themselves, and looked half wild, half stupid. The women sat, and began to scream: for they had heard a word that has terrors for us all; peculiar terrors for them.

This alarm was due to a personage hitherto undervalued in the establishment.

Mr. Francis Beverley had been THINKING. So now, finding all the patients boxed up, and their attendants romping in the drawing-room, he lighted seven fires, skillfully on the whole, for practice makes perfect; but, singular oversight, he omitted one essential ingredient in a fire, and that was the grate.

To be plain, Mr. Francis made seven bonfires of bed-curtains, chairs, and other combustibles in the servants' garrets, lighted them contemporaneously, and retired to the basement, convinced he had taken the surest means to deliver his friend out of Drayton House; and with a certain want of candour that characterises the weak, proceeded to black his other bad masters' shoes with singular assiduity.

There was no wind to blow the flame; but it was a clear frost; and soon fiery tongues shot out of three garret-windows into the night, and lurid gleams burnished four more, and the old house was burning merrily overhead, and ringing with hilarity on the first floor.

But the neighbours saw, pointed, wondered, comprehended, shouted, rang, knocked, and surged round the iron gate. "Fire! fire! fire!" and "Fire!" went down the road, and men on horseback galloped for engines; and the terror-stricken porter opened and the people rushed in and hammered at the hall doors, and, when Rooke ran down and opened, "Fire!" was the word that met him from a score of eager throats and glittering eyes.

"Fire! Where?" he cried.

"Where! Why, *you* are on fire. Blazing!"

He ran out and looked up at the tongues of flame and volleys of smoke. "Shut the gate," he roared. "Call the police. Fire! fire!" And he dashed back, and calling to the other keepers to unlock all the doors they had keys of, ran up to the garrets to see what could be done. He came out awe-stricken at what he saw. He descended hastily to the third floor. Now the third floor of that wing was occupied principally by servants. In fact, the only patients at that time were Dodd and Alfred. Rooke called to the men below to send Hayes up to No. 75 with his key directly: he then ran down to the next floor; of which he had keys; and opened all the doors, and said to the inmates with a ghastly attempt at cheerfulness, belied by his shaking voice, "Get up, gentlemen; there is a ball and supper going on below." He was afraid to utter the word "fire" to them. The other keepers were as rapid, each on his beat, and soon the more rational patients took the alarm and were persuaded or driven out half dressed into the yard, where they cowered together in extremity of fear; for the fire began to roar overhead like a lion, and lighted up

the whole interior red and bright. All was screaming and confusion; and then came a struggle to get the incurable out from the basement story. There was no time to handcuff them. The keepers trusted to the terror of the scene to cow them, and so opened the doors and got them out anyhow. Wild, weird forms, with glaring eyes and matted hair, leaped out and ran into the hall, and laughed, and danced, and cursed in the lurid reflexion of the fires above. Hell seemed discharging demons. Men recoiled from them. And well they did; for now the skylight exploded, and the pieces fell tinkling on the marble hall fast as hail. The crowd recoiled and ran; but those awful figures continued their gambols. One picked up the burning glass and ground it in his hands that bled directly: but he felt neither burn nor cut. The keepers rushed in to withdraw them from so dangerous a place: all but one obeyed with sudden tameness: that one struggled and yelled like a demon. In the midst of which fearful contest came a sudden thundering at a door on the third floor.

"What is that?" cried Rooke.

"It is Mr. Hardie," screamed the Robin. "You have left him locked in."

"I told Hayes to let him out long ago."

"But Hayes hasn't got the key. You've got it."

"No, no. I tell you Hayes has got it."

"No, no! Murder! murder! They are dead men. Run for Mrs. Archbold, somebody. Run! Here, hammers, hammers! for God's sake come and help me break the door. Oh Rooke, Rooke!"

"As I'm a man Hayes has got the key," cried Rooke, stamping on the ground, and white with terror.

By this time Garrett had got a hammer, and he and Wales rushed wildly up the stairs to batter in the strong door if they could. They got to the third floor, but with difficulty; the smoke began to blind them and choke them, and fiery showers fell on them, and drove them back smarting and choking. Garrett sank down gasping at the stair-foot. Wales ran into the yard uttering pitiful cries, and pointing wildly upwards: but before he got there, a hand had broken through the glass of a window up in the third floor, the poor white hand of a perishing prisoner, and clutched the framework and tore at it.

At this hand a thousand white faces were now upturned amid groans of pity and terror, such as only multitudes can utter. Suddenly those anxious faces and glistening eyes turned like one, for an attempt, wild and unintelligible, but still an attempt, was about to be made to save that hand and its owner out of the very jaws of death.

Now amongst the spectators was one whose life and reason were at stake on that attempt.

Mrs. Dodd was hurrying homeward from this very neighbourhood when the fire broke out. Her son Edward was coming at nine o'clock to tea, and, better still, to sleep. He was leaving the fire brigade. It had disappointed him; he found the fire-escape men saved the lives, the firemen only the property. He had gone into the business earnestly too; he had invented a thing like a treble pouch hook, which could be fastened in a moment to the end of a rope, and thrown into the window, and would cling to the bare wall, if there was nothing better, and enable him to go

up and bring life down. But he had never got a chance to try it; and, per contra, he was on the engine when they went tearing over a woman and broke her arm and collar-bone in the Blackfriars Road: and also when they went tearing over their own fire-dog and crippled him. All this seemed out of character, and shocked Edward: and then his mother could not get over the jacket.

In a quarter of an hour he was to take off the obnoxious jacket for ever, and was now lounging at the station smoking a short pipe, when a man galloped up crying "Fire!"

"All right!" said Edward, giving a whiff. "Where?"

"Lunatic Asylum. Drayton House."

Guess how long before the horses were to, and the engine tearing at a gallop down the road, and the firemen shouting "Fire! fire!" to clear the way, and Edward's voice the loudest.

When the report of fire swept townward past Mrs. Dodd, she turned: and saw the glow.

"Oh dear," said she, "that must be somewhere near Drayton House." And full of the tender fears that fill such bosoms as hers for those they love, she could not go home till she had ascertained that it was not Drayton House. Moreover, Edward's was the nearest station; she had little hope now of seeing him to tea. She sighed, and retraced her steps, and made timid inquiries, but could gain no clear information. Presently she heard galloping behind her, and the firemen's wild sharp cry of fire. An engine drawn by two powerful brown horses came furiously, all on fire itself with red paint and polished steel gleaming in

the lights: helmeted men clustered on it, and out of one of these helmets looked a face like a fighting lion's, the eyes so dilated, the countenance in such towering excitement, the figure half rising from his seat as though galloping was too slow and he wanted to fly. It was Edward: mother and son caught sight of one another as the engine thundered by, and he gave her a solemn ardent look and pointed towards the fire: by that burning look and eloquent gesture she knew it was something more than a common fire. She trembled and could not move. But this temporary weakness was followed by an influx of wild vigour; she forgot her forty-two years, and flew to hover round the fire as the hen round water. Unfortunately she was too late to get any nearer than the road outside the gates, the crowd was so dense. And, while her pale face and anxious eyes, the eyes of a wife and a mother, were bent on that awful fire, the human tide flowed swiftly up behind her, and there she was wedged in. She was allowed her foot of ground to stand and look like the rest — no more. Mere unit in that mass of panting humanity, hers was one of the thousands of upturned faces lurid in the light of the now blazing roof. She saw with thousands the hand break the window and clutch the frame: she gasped with the crowd at that terrible and piteous sight, and her bosom panted for her fellow-creature in sore peril. But what is this? The mob inside utter a great roar of hope; the crowd outside strain every eye.

A gleaming helmet overtops the outer wall. It is a fireman mounting the great elm-tree in the madhouse yard. The crowd inside burst in a cheer. He had a rope round his loins; his face was to the tree. He

mounted and mounted like a cat; higher, and higher, and higher, till he reached a branch about twelve feet above the window and as many distant from it laterally: the crowd cheered him lustily. But Mrs. Dodd, half distracted with terror, implored them not to encourage him. "It is my child!" she cried despairingly; "my poor reckless darling! Come down, Edward; for your poor mother's sake, come down."

"Dear heart," said a woman, "it is the lady's son. Poor thing!"

"Stand on my knee, ma'am," said a coal-heaver.

"Oh no, sir, no. I could not look at him for the world. I can only pray for him. Oh, good people, pray for us!" And she covered her face, and prayed and trembled and sobbed hysterically. A few yards behind was another woman, who had arrived later, yet like her was wedged immovable. This woman was more terror-stricken than Mrs. Dodd: and well she might; for *she* knew who was behind that fatal window: the woman's name was Edith Archbold. The flames were now leaping through the roof, and surging up towards heaven in waves of fire six feet high. Edward, scorched and half blinded, managed to fasten his rope to the bough, and, calculating the distances vertical and lateral he had to deal with, took up rope accordingly, and launched himself into the air.

The crowd drew their breath so hard it sounded like a murmur. To their horror he missed the window, and went swinging back.

There was a cry of dismay. But Edward had never hoped to leap into the window; he went swinging by the rope back to the main stem of the tree, gave it a fierce spang with his feet, and by this means and a

powerful gesture of his herculean loins got an inch nearer the window; back again, and then the same game; and so he went swinging to and fro over a wider and wider space; and, by letting out an inch of cord each swing, his flying feet came above the window-ledge, then a little higher, then higher still, and now, oh sight strange and glorious — as this helmeted hero, with lips clenched and great eyes that stared unflinching at the surging flames, and gleamed supernaturally with inward and outward fire, swang to and fro on his frail support still making for the window — the heads of all the hoping, fearing, admiring, panting crowd went surging and waving to and fro beneath; so did not their hearts only but their agitated bodies follow the course of his body, as it rushed to and fro faster and faster through the hot air starred with snow-flakes, and hail, of fire. And those his fellow-men for whom the brave fireman made this supernatural effort, did they know their desperate condition? Were they still alive? One little hour ago Alfred sat on the bed, full of hope. Every minute he expected to hear the Robin put a key into the door. He was all ready, and his money in his pocket. Alas! his liberator came not: some screw loose again. Presently he was conscious of a great commotion in the house. Feet ran up and down. Then came a smell of burning. The elm-tree outside was illuminated. He was glad at first; he had a spite against the place. But soon he became alarmed, and hammered at the door and tried to force it. Impossible. "Fire!" rang from men's voices. Fire crackled above his head; he ran about the room like a wild creature; he sprang up at the window and dashed his hand through, but fell

back. He sprang again and got his hand on some of the lighter woodwork; he drew himself up nearly to the window, and then the wood gave way and he fell to the ground, and striking the back of his head, nearly stunned himself; the flames roared fearfully now; and at this David, who had hitherto sat unconcerned, started up, and in a stentorian voice issued order upon order to furl every rag of sail and bring the ship to the wind. He thought it was a tempest. "Oh hush! hush!" cried Alfred in vain. A beam fell from the roof to the floor, precursor of the rest. On this David thought the ship was ashore, and shouted a fresh set of orders proper to the occasion, so terribly alike are the angry voices of the sister-elements. But Alfred implored him, and got him to kneel down with him, and held his hand, and prayed.

And, even while they kneeled and Alfred prayed, Death and Life met and fought for them. Under the door, tight as it was, and through the keyhole, struggled a hot stifling smoke, merciful destroyer running before fire: and the shadow of a gigantic figure began to flicker in from the outside, and to come and go upon the wall. Alfred did not know what that was, but it gave him a vague hope: he prayed aloud as men pray only for their bodies. (The crowd heard him and hushed itself breathless.)

The smoke penetrated faster, blinding and stifling; the giant shadow came and went. But now the greater part of the roof fell in with an awful report; the blazing timbers thundered down to the basement with endless clatter of red-hot tiles; the walls quivered, and the building belched skyward a thousand jets of fire like a bouquet of rockets; and then a cloud of smoke.

Alfred gave up all hope, and prepared to die. Crash! as if discharged from a cannon, came bursting through the window, with the roar of an applauding multitude and a mother's unheeded scream, a helmeted figure, rope in hand, and alighted erect and commanding on the floor amidst a shower of splinters and tinkling glass. "Up men for your lives," roared this fire-warrior, clutching them hard, and dragged them both up to their feet by one prodigious gesture: all three faces came together and shone in the lurid light; and he knew his father and "the Wretch," and "the Wretch" knew him. "Oh!" "Ah!" passed like pistol shots; but not a word: even this strange meeting went for little, so awful was the moment, so great are Death and Fire. Edward clawed his rope to the bed; up to the window by it, dropped his line to fireman Jackson planted express below, and in another moment was hauling up a rope ladder: this he attached, and getting on it and holding his own rope by way of banister, cried "Now men, quick, for your lives." But poor David called that deserting the ship, and demurred, till Alfred assured him the captain had ordered it. He then submitted directly, touched his forelock to Edward, whom he took for that officer, and went down the ladder; Alfred followed.

Now the moment those two figures emerged from the burning pile, Mrs. Dodd, already half dead with terror for her son, saw and knew her husband: for all about him it was as light as day.

What terror! what joy! what gratitude! what pride! what a tempest of emotions!

But her fears were not ended; Edward, not to overweight the ladder, went dangling by his hands

along the rope towards the tree. And his mother's eyes stared fearfully from him to the other, and her heart hung trembling on her husband descending cautiously, and then on his preserver, her son, who was dangling along by the hands on that frail support. The mob cheered him royally, but she screamed and hid her face again. At last both her darlings were safe, and then the lusty cheers made her thrill with pride and joy, till all of a sudden they seemed to die away and the terrible fire to go out; and the sore-tried wife and mother drooped her head and swooned away, wedged in and kept from falling by the crowd.

Inside, the mob parted and made two rushes, one at the rescued men, one at the gallant fireman. Alfred and David were overpowered with curiosity and sympathy. They had to shake a hundred honest hands; and others still pressing on, hurried them nearly off their feet.

"Gently, good friends; don't part us," said Alfred.

"He is the keeper," said one of the crowd.

"Yes, I'm his keeper: and I want to get him quietly away. This excitement will do him harm else; good friends, help me out by that door."

"All right," was the cry, and they rushed with him to the back door. Rooke, who was about twenty yards off, saw and suspected this movement. He fought his way and struggled after Alfred in silence. Presently, to his surprise, Alfred unlocked the door and whipped out with David, leaving the door open. Rooke shouted and halloaed: "Stop him! he is escaping," and struggled madly to the door: now another crowd had been waiting in the meadows; seeing the

door open they rushed in and the doorway was jammed directly. In the confusion Alfred drew David along the side of the wall; told him to stay quiet, bolted behind an outhouse, and then ran across country for the bare life.

To his horror David followed him, and with a madman's agility soon caught him.

He snorted like a spirited horse, and shouted cheerily, "Go ahead, messmate; I smell blue water."

"Come on then," cried Alfred, half mad himself with excitement, and the pair ran furiously, and dashed through hedges and ditches, torn, bleeding, splashed, triumphant; behind them the burning madhouse, above them the spangled sky, the fresh free air of liberty blowing in their nostrils, and rushing past their ears.

Alfred's chest expanded, he laughed for joy, he sang for joy, he leaped as he went; nor did he care where he went. David took the command, and kept snuffing the air, and shaping his course for blue water. And so they rushed along the livelong night.

Free.

CHAPTER VII.

A REPORT came round that the asylum was open in the rear. A rush was made thither from the front; and this thinned the crowd considerably; so then Mrs. Dodd was got out by the help of some humane persons, and carried into the nearest house, more dead than alive. There she found Mrs. Archbold in a pitiable state. That lady had been looking on the fire, with the key in her pocket, by taking which she was like to be a murderess: her terror and remorse were distracting, and the revulsion had thrown her into violent hysterics. Mrs. Dodd plucked up a little strength, and characteristically enough tottered to her assistance, and called for the best remedies, and then took her hand and pressed it, and whispered soothingly that both were now safe, meaning David and Edward. Mrs. Archbold thought she meant Alfred and David: this new shock was as good for her as cold water: she became quieter, and presently gulped out, "You saw them? you knew them (ump) all that way off?"

"Knew them?" said Mrs. Dodd; "why one was my husband, and the other my son." Mrs. Archbold gave a sigh of relief. "Yes, madam," continued Mrs. Dodd, "the young fireman, who went and saved my husband, was my own son, my Edward; my hero; oh, I am a happy wife, a proud mother;" she could say no more for tears of joy, and while she wept deliciously, Mrs. Archbold cried too, and so invigorated and refreshed her cunning, and presently she perked up and told Mrs. Dodd boldly that Edward had been

seeking her, and was gone home: she had better follow him, or he would be anxious. "But my poor husband!" objected Mrs. Dodd.

"He is safe," said the other; "I saw him (ump) with an attendant."

"Ah," said Mrs. Dodd, with meaning, "that other my son rescued was an attendant, was he?"

"Yes." (Ump.)

She then promised to take David under her especial care, and Mrs. Dodd consented, though reluctantly, to go home.

To her surprise Edward had not yet arrived, and Julia was sitting up, very anxious; and flew at her with a gurgle, and kissed her eagerly, and then, drawing back her head, searched the maternal eyes for what was the matter. "Ah, you may well look," said Mrs. Dodd. "O my child! what a night this has been;" and she sank into a chair, and held up her arms; Julia settled down in them directly, and in that position Mrs. Dodd told all the night's work, told it under a running accompaniment of sighs and kisses, and ejaculations, and "dear mammas," and "poor mammas," and bursts of sympathy, astonishment, pity, and wonder. Thus embellished and interrupted, the strange tale was hardly ended, when a manly step came up the stairs, and both ladies pinched each other and were still as mice, and in walked a fireman with a wet livery, and a face smirched with smoke. Julia flew at him with a gurgle of the first degree, and threw her arms round his neck, and kissed both his blackened cheeks again and again, crying "Oh my own, my precious, my sweet, brave, darling, kiss me, kiss me, kiss me, you are a hero, a Christian hero,

that saves life, not takes it——" Mrs. Dodd checked her impetuous career by asking piteously if his mother was not to have him. On this, Julia drew him along by the hand, and sank with him at Mrs. Dodd's knees, and she held him at arms' length and gazed at him, and then drew him close and enfolded him, and thanked God for him; and then they both embraced him at once, and interwove him Heaven knows how, and poured the wealth of their womanly hearts out on him in a torrent and nearly made him snivel. But presently something in his face struck Mrs. Dodd, accustomed to read her children. "Is there anything the matter, love?" she inquired anxiously. He looked down and said, "I am dead sleepy, mamma, for one thing."

"Of course he is, poor child," said Julia, doing the sub-maternal: "wait till I see everything is comfortable," and she flew off, turned suddenly at the door with "Oh, you darling!" and up to his bedroom, and put more coals on his fire, and took a swift housewifely look all round.

Mrs. Dodd seized the opportunity. "Edward, there is something amiss."

"And no mistake," said he drily. "But I thought if I told you before her you might scold me."

"Scold you, love? Never. Hush! I'll come to your room by-and-by."

Soon after this they all bade each other good night; and presently Mrs. Dodd came and tapped softly at her son's door, and found him with his vest and coat off, and his helmet standing on the table reflecting a red coal; he was seated by the fire in a brown study, smoking. He apologised, and offered to throw the

weed away. "No, no," said she, suppressing a cough, "not if it does you good."

"Well, mother, when you are in a fix smoke is a soother, you know; and I'm in a regular fix."

"A fix!" sighed Mrs. Dodd resignedly: and waited patiently, all ears.

"Mamma," said the fire-warrior, becoming speculative under the dreamy influence of the weed, "I wonder whether such a muddle ever was before. When a man is fighting with fire, what with the heat, and what with the excitement, his pulse is at a hundred and sixty, and his brain all in a whirl, and he scarce knows what he is doing till after it is done. But I've been thinking of it all since. (Puff.) 'There was my poor little mamma in the mob; I double myself up for my spring, and I go at the window, and through it; now on this side of it I hear my mother cry 'Edward! come down;' on the other side I fall on two men perishing in an oven; one is my own father, and the other is, who do you think? 'The Wretch.'"

Mrs. Dodd held up her hands in mute amazement.

"I had promised to break every bone in his skin at our first meeting; and I kept my promise by saving his skin and bones, and life and all." (Puff.)

Mrs. Dodd groaned aloud. "I half suspected it," she said faintly. "That tall figure, that haughty, grace! But no; you are mistaken; Mrs. Archbold told me positively he was an attendant."

"Then she told you a cracker. It was not an attendant, but a madman, and that madman was Alfred Hardie, upon my soul! Our Julia's missing bridegroom."

He smoked on in profound silence waiting for her

to speak. But she lay back in her chair mute and all relaxed, as if the news had knocked her down.

"Come, now," said Edward at last; "what is to be done? May I tell Julia? that is the question."

"Not for the world," said Mrs. Dodd, shocked into energy. "Would you blight her young life for ever as mine is blighted?" She then assured him that, if Alfred's sad state came to Julia's ears, all her love for him would revive, and she would break with Mr. Hurd, and indeed never marry all her life. "I see no end to her misery," continued Mrs. Dodd, with a deep sigh; "for she is full of courage; she would not shrink from a madhouse (why she visits lazar-houses every day); she would be always going to see her Alfred, and so nurse her pity and her unhappy love. No, no; let *me* be a widow with a living husband, if it is God's will: I have had my happy days. But my child she shall not be so withered in the flower of her days for any man that ever breathed: she shall not, I say." The mother could utter no more for emotion.

"Well," said Edward, "you know best. I generally make a mess of it when I disobey you. But concealments are bad things too. We used to go with our bosoms open. Ah!" (Puff.)

"Edward," said Mrs. Dodd, after some consideration, "the best thing is to marry her to Mr. Hurd at once. He has spoken to me for her, and I sounded her."

"Has he? Well, and what did she say?"

"She said she would rather not marry at all, but live and die with me. Then I pressed her a little, you know. Then she did say she could never marry any but a clergyman, now she had lost her poor Alfred.

And then I told her I thought Mr. Hurd could make her happy, and she would make me happy if she could esteem him; and marry him."

"Well, mamma, and what then?"

"Why then my poor child gave me a look that haunts me still — a look of unutterable love, and reproach, and resignation, and despair, and burst out crying so piteously I could say no more. Oh! oh! oh! oh!"

"Don't you cry, mammy dear," said Edward. "Ah, I remember when a tear was a wonder in our house." And the fire-warrior sucked at his cigar, to stop a sigh.

"And n — now n — not a d — day without them," sighed Mrs. Dodd. "But *you* have cost me none, my precious boy."

"I'm waiting my time. (Puff.) Mamma, take my advice; don't you fidget so. Let things alone. Why hurry her into marrying Mr. Hurd or anybody? Look here; I'll keep dark to please you, if you'll keep quiet to please me."

At breakfast time came a messenger with a line from Mrs. Archbold, to say that David had escaped from Drayton House, in company with another dangerous maniac.

Mrs. Dodd received the blow with a kind of desperate resignation. She rose quietly from the table without a word, and went to put on her bonnet, leaving her breakfast and the note; for she did not at once see all that was implied in the communication. She took Edward with her to Drayton House. The firemen had saved one half of that building: the rest was a black shell. Mrs. Archbold came to them, looking

haggard, and told them two keepers were already scouring the country, and an advertisement sent to all the journals.

"Oh, madam!" said Mrs. Dodd, "if the other should hurt him, or lead him somewhere to his death?"

Mrs. Archbold said she might dismiss this fear; the patient in question had but one illusion, and, though terribly dangerous when thwarted in that, was most intelligent in a general way, and much attached to Mr. Dodd; they were always together.

A strange expression shot into Mrs. Dodd's eye: she pinched Edward's arm to keep him quiet, and said with feigned indifference:

"Then it was the one who was in such danger with my husband last night?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Archbold, off her guard. It had not occurred to her that this handsome, fashionably-dressed young gentleman, was the fireman of last night. She saw her mistake, though, the moment he said bluntly, "Why you told my mother it was an attendant."

"Did I, madam?" asked Mrs. Archbold, mighty innocently: "I suppose I thought so. Well, I was mistaken, unfortunately."

Mrs. Dodd was silent a moment, then, somewhat hastily, bade Mrs. Archbold good-bye. She told the cabman to drive to an old acquaintance of ours, Mr. Green. He had set up detective on his own account. He was not at his office, but expected. She sat patiently down till he came in. They put their heads together, and Green dashed down to the asylum with a myrmidon, while Mrs. Dodd went into the City to obtain

leave of absence from Cross and Co. This was politely declined at first, but on Mrs. Dodd showing symptoms of leaving them altogether, it was was conceded. She returned home with Edward, and there was Mr. Green; he had actually traced the fugitives by broken fences, and occasional footsteps in the side-clay of ditches, so far as to leave no doubt they had got upon the great south-eastern road. Then Mrs. Dodd had a female inspiration. "The Dover road! ah! my husband will make for the sea."

"I shouldn't wonder, being a sailor," said Green; "it is a pleasure to work with a lady like you, that puts in a good hint. Know anything about the other one, ma'am?"

Mrs. Dodd almost started at this off-hand question. But it was a natural one for Green to ask.

She said gravely, "I do. To my cost."

Green's eye sparkled, and he took out his notebook. "Now where is *he* like to make for?"

Mrs. Dodd seemed to wince at the question, and then turned her eyes inward to divine. The result was she gave a downright shudder, and said evasively, "Being with David, I hope and pray he will go towards the coast."

"No, no," said Green, "it won't do to count on that altogether. How do we know which of the two will lead the other? You must please to put Mr. Dodd out of the question, ma'am, for a moment. Now we'll say No. 2 is escaped alone: where is he like to run to?"

Mrs. Dodd thus pressed, turned her eyes more and more inward, and said at last in a very low voice, and with a sort of concentrated horror,

"He will come to my house."

Mr. Green booked this eagerly. The lady's emotion was nothing to him; the hint was invaluable, the combination interesting. "Well, ma'am," said he, "I'll plant a good man in sight of your door: and I'll take the Dover road directly with my drag. My teeth weren't strong enough for the last nut you gave me to crack: let us try this one; Tom Green isn't often beat twice running."

"I will go with you, Mr. Green."

"Honoured and proud, ma'am. But a lady like you in my dog-cart along o' me and my mate!"

Mrs. Dodd waived this objection almost contemptuously; she was all wife now.

It was agreed that Green should drive round for her in an hour. He departed for the present, and Edward proposed to go in the dog-cart too, but she told him no; she wanted him at home to guard his sister against "the Wretch." Then seeing him look puzzled, "Consider, Edward," said she, "he is not like your poor father: he has not forgotten. That advertisement, Aileen Aroon, it was from him, you know. And then why does he attach himself so to poor papa? Do you not see it is because he is Julia's father. 'The Wretch' loves her still."

Edward from puzzled looked very grave. "What a head you have got, mamma!" he said. "I should never have seen all this: yet it's plain enough now, as you put it."

"Yes it is plain. Our darling is betrothed to a maniac; that maniac loves her; and much I fear she loves him. Some new calamity is impending. Oh, my son, I feel it already heavy on my heart. What is it to be? Is your father to be led to destruction,

or will that furious wretch burst in upon your sister, and kill her, or perhaps kill Mr. Hurd, if he catches them together. What may not happen now? The very air seems to me swarming with calamities."

"O, I'll take care of all that," said Edward. And he comforted her a little by promising faithfully not to let Julia go out of his sight till her return.

She put on a plain travelling-dress. The dog-cart came. She slipped fifty sovereigns into Mr. Green's hands for expenses, and off they went at a slapping pace. The horse was a great bony hunter of rare speed and endurance, and his long stride and powerful action raised poor Mrs. Dodd's hopes, and the rushing air did her good. Green, to her surprise, made few inquiries for some miles on the Dover road; but he explained to her that the parties they were after had probably walked all night. "They don't tire, that sort," said Mr. Green.

At Dartford they got a doubtful intimation, on the strength of which he rattled on to Rochester. There he pulled up, deposited Mrs. Dodd at the principal inn till morning, and scoured the town for intelligence.

He inquired of all the policemen; described his men, and shrewdly added out of his intelligence, "Both splashed and dirty."

No, the Bobbies had not seen them.

Then he walked out to the side of the town nearest London, and examined all the dealers in food. At last he found a baker who, early that morning, had sold a quartern loaf to two tall men without hats, "and splashed fearful;" he added, "I thought they had broken prison; but 'twas no business of mine: they paid for the bread right enough."

On hearing they had entered Rochester hatless, the shrewd Mr. Green made direct to the very nearest slop-shop, and his sagacity was rewarded; the shopkeeper was a chatterbox, and told him yes, two gents out on a frolic had bought a couple of hats of him, and a whole set of sailor's clothes. "I think they were respectable, too; but nothing else would satisfy him. So the young one he humoured him, and bought them. I took his old ones in exchange."

At that Green offered a sovereign for the old clothes blindfold. The trader instantly asked two pounds, and took thirty shillings.

Green now set the police to scour the town for a gentleman and a common sailor in company, offered a handsome reward, and went to bed in a small inn, with David's clothes by the kitchen fire. Early in the morning he went to Mrs. Dodd's hotel with David's clothes nicely dried, and told her his tale. She knew the clothes directly, kissed them, and cried over them: then gave him her hand with a world of dignity and grace: "What an able man! Sir, you inspire me with great confidence."

"And you me with zeal, ma'am," said the delighted Green. "Why I'd go through fire and water for a lady like you, that pays well, and doesn't grudge a fellow a bit of praise. Now you must eat a bit, ma'am, if it's ever so little, and then we'll take the road; for the police think the parties have left the town, and by their night's work they must be good travellers."

The dog-cart took the road, and the ex-hunter stepped out thirteen miles an hour.

Now at this moment Alfred and David were

bowling along ahead with a perfect sense of security. All that first night, the grandest of his life, Alfred walked on air, and drank the glorious exhilarating breath of Freedom. But, when the sun dawned on them, his intoxicating joy began to be dashed with apprehension; hatless and bemired, might they not be suspected and detained by some officious authority?

But the slop-shop set that all right. He took a double-bedded room in The Bear, locked the door, put the key under his pillow, and slept till eleven. At noon they were on the road again, and, as they swung lustily along in the frosty but kindly air, Alfred's chest expanded, his spirits rose, and he felt a man all over. Exhilarated by freedom, youth, and motion, and a little inflated by reviving vanity, his heart, buoyant as his foot, now began to nurse aspiring projects: he would indict his own father, and the doctors, and immolate them on the altar of justice, and publicly wipe off the stigma they had cast on him, and meantime he would cure David and restore him to his family.

He loved this harmless companion of his cell, his danger, and his flight; loved him for Julia's sake, loved him for his own. Youth and vanity whispered, "I know more about madness than the doctors; I have seen it closer." It struck him David's longing for blue water was one of those unerring instincts that sometimes guide the sick to their cure. And then as the law permits the forcible recapture of a patient — without a fresh order or certificates — within fourteen days of his escape from an asylum, he did not think it prudent to show himself in London till that time should have elapsed: so, all things considered, why

not hide a few days with David in some insignificant seaport, and revel in liberty and blue water with him all day long, and so by associations touch the spring of memory, and begin the cure? As for David, he seemed driven seaward by some unseen spur; he fidgeted at all delay; even dinner fretted him; he panted so for his natural element. Alfred humoured him, and an hour after sunset they reached the town of Canterbury. Here Alfred took the same precautions as before, and slept till nine o'clock.

When he awoke, he found David walking to and fro impatiently. "All right, messmate," said Alfred, "we shall soon be in blue water." He made all haste, and they were on the road again by ten, walking at a gallant pace.

But the dog-cart was already rattling along about thirty miles behind them. Green inquired at all the turnpikes and vehicles; the scent was cold at first, but warmer by degrees, and hot at Canterbury. Green just baited his gallant horse, and came foaming on, and just as the pair entered the town of Folkestone, their pursuers came up to the cross-roads, not five miles behind them.

Alfred went to a good inn in Folkestone and ordered a steak, then strolled with David by the beach, and gloried in the water with him. "After dinner we will take a boat, and have a sail," said he. "See, there's a nice boat, riding at anchor there."

David snuffed the breeze and his eye sparkled, and he said, "Wind due east, messmate." And this remark, slight as it was, was practical, and gave Alfred great delight: strengthened his growing conviction that not for nothing had this charge been

thrown on him. He should be the one to cure his own father: for Julia's father was his: he had no other now. "All right," said he gaily, "we'll soon be on blue water: but first we'll have our dinner, old boy, for I am starving." David said nothing, and went rather doggedly back to the inn with him.

The steak was on the table. Alfred told the waiter to uncover and David to fall to, while he just ran up-stairs to wash his hands. He came down in less than two minutes; but David was gone, and the waiter standing there erect and apathetic like a wooden sentinel.

"Why where is he?" said Alfred.

"Gent's gone out," was the reply.

"And you stood there and let him? you born idiot. Which way is he gone?"

"I don't know," said the waiter angrily, "I ain't a p'liceman. None but respectable gents comes here, as don't want watching." Alfred darted out and scoured the town; he asked everybody if they had seen a tall gentleman dressed like a common sailor: nobody could tell him: there were so many sailors about the port; that which in an inland town would have betrayed the truant concealed him here. A cold perspiration began to gather on Alfred's brow, as he ran wildly all over the place.

He could not find him, nor any trace of him. At last it struck him that he had originally proposed to go to Dover, and had spoken of that town to David, though he had now glanced aside, making for the smaller ports on the south coast: he hired a horse directly, and galloped furiously to Dover. He rode down to the pier, gave his horse to a boy to hold,

and ran about inquiring for David. He could not find him: but at last he found a policeman, who told him he thought there was another party on the same lay as himself: "No," said the man, correcting himself, "it was two they were after, a gentleman and a sailor. Perhaps you are his mate."

Alfred's blood ran cold. "Pursued! and so hotly! No, no," he stammered; "I suspect I am on the same business." Then he said cunningly (for asylums teach the frankest natures cunning), "Come and have a glass of grog and tell me all about it." Bobby consented, and under its influence described Mrs. Dodd and her companions to him.

But not everybody can describe minutely. In the bare outlines, which were all this artist could furnish him, Alfred recognised at once whom do you think? Mrs. Archbold, Dr. Wolf, and his arch enemy Rooke, the keeper. Doubtless his own mind, seizing on so vague a description, adapted it rather hastily to what seemed probable. Mrs. Dodd never occurred to him, nor that David was the sole, or even the main, object of the pursuit. He was thoroughly puzzled what to do. However, as his pursuers had clearly scoured Dover, and would have found David if there, he made use of their labours and galloped back towards Folkestone. But he took the precaution to inquire at the first turnpike, and there he learned a lady and two men had passed through about an hour before in a dog-cart, it was a wonder he had missed them. Alfred gnashed his teeth; "Curse you," he muttered. "Well, do my work in Folkestone, I'll find him yet, and baffle you." He turned his horse's head westward and rode after David. Convinced that his lost friend would not

go inland, he took care to keep near the cliffs, and had ever an eye on the beach when the road came near enough.

About eight miles west of Folkestone he saw a dog-cart going down a hill before him: but there was only a single person in it. However, he increased his pace and got close behind it as it mounted the succeeding hill, which was a high one. Walking leisurely behind it his quick eye caught sight of a lady's veil wrapped round the iron of the seat.

That made him instantly suspect this might be the dog-cart after all. But, if so, how came a stranger in it? He despised a single foe, and resolved to pump this one and learn where the others were.

While he was thinking how he should begin the dog-cart stopped at the top of the hill, and the driver looked seaward at some object that appeared to interest him.

It was a glorious scene. Viewed from so great a height the sea expanded like ocean, and its light-blue waters sparkled and laughed innumerable in the breeze. "A beautiful sight, sir," said the escaped prisoner, "you may well stop to look at it." The man touched his hat and chuckled. "I don't think you know what I am looking at, sir," he said politely.

"I thought it was the lovely sea view; so bright, so broad, so *free*."

"No, sir; not but what I can enjoy that a bit, too: but what I'm looking at is an 'unt. Do you see that little boat? Sailing right down the coast about eight miles off. Well, sir, what do you think there is in that boat? But you'll never guess. A madman."

"Ah!"

"Curious, sir, isn't it: a respectable gentleman too he is, and sails well; only stark staring mad. There was two of 'em in company: but it seems they can't keep together long. *Our* one steals a fisherman's boat, and there he goes down channel. And now look here, sir; see this steam-tug smoking along right in front of us: she's after him, and see there's my governor aboard standing by the wheel with a Bobby and a lady: and if ever there was a lady she's one;" here he lowered his voice. "She's that mad gentleman's wife, sir, as I am a living sinner."

They both looked down on the strange chase in silence. "Will they catch her?" asked Alfred at last, under his breath.

"How can we be off it? steam against sails. And if he runs ashore, I shall be there to nab him." Alfred looked, and looked: the water came into his eyes. "It's the best thing that can befal him now," he murmured. He gave the man half-a-crown, and then turned his horse's head and walked him down the hill towards Folkestone. On his arrival there he paid for his horse, and his untasted dinner, and took the first train to London, a little dispirited; and a good deal mortified; for he hated to be beat: but David was in good hands, that was one comfort; and he had glorious work on hand, love and justice. He went to an out of the way inn in the suburbs, and, when he had bought a carpet-bag and some linen and other necessaries, he had but one sovereign left.

His heart urged him vehemently to go at once and find his Julia: but alas! he did not even know where she lived; and he dared not at present make public

inquiries: that would draw attention to himself, and be his destruction; for Wolf stood well with the police, and nearly always recaptured his truant patients by their aid before the fourteen days and elapsed. He determined to go first to a solicitor: and launch him against his enemies, while compelled to shirk them in his own person. Curious position! Now amongst his father's creditors was Mr. Compton, a solicitor, known for an eccentric, but honourable man, and for success in litigation. Mr. Compton used to do his own business in Barkington, and employ an agent in London: but Alfred remembered to have heard just before his incarceration that he had reversed the parts, and now lived in London. Alfred found him out by the Directory, and called at his chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He had to wait some time in the outer office listening to a fluent earnest client preaching within: but presently a sharp voice broke in upon the drone, and, after a few sentences, Mr. Compton ushered out a client with these remarkable words: "And as for your invention, it has been invented four times before you invented it, and never was worth inventing at all. And you have borrowed two hundred pounds of me in ninety loans, each of which cost me an hour's invaluable time: I hold ninety acknowledgments in your handwriting; and I'll put them all in force for my protection;" with this he turned to his head clerk; "Mr. Colls, take out a writ against this client; what is your christian name, sir? I forget."

"Simon," said the gaping client, off his guard.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Compton with sudden politeness: then resuming hostilities, — "a writ in the Common Pleas against Simon Macfarlane: keep it in

your drawer, Colls, and if ever the said Macfarlane does me the honour to call on me again serve him with it on the spot; and, if not, not; good morning, sir." And with this he bolted into his own room and slammed its door. The clerks opened the outer door to Mr. Macfarlane with significant grins, and he went out bewildered sorely, yea even like one that walketh abroad in his sleep. "Now, sir," said Mr. Colls cheerfully to Alfred. But the new client naturally hesitated now: he put on his most fascinating smile, and said: "Well, Mr. Colls, what do you advise? Is this a moment to beard the lion in his den?"

At Alfred's smile and address Colls fell in love with him directly, and assured him sotto voce, and with friendly familiarity, that now was his time. "Why, he'll be as sweet as honey now he has got rid of a *client*." With this he took Alfred's name, and ushered him into a room piled with japanned tin boxes, where Mr. Compton sat, looking all complacency, at a large desk table, on which briefs, and drafts, and letters lay in profusion and seeming confusion. He rose, and with a benignant courtesy invited Alfred to sit down and explain his business.

The reader is aware our Oxonian could make a close and luminous statement. He began at the beginning, but soon disposed of preliminaries and came to his capture at Silverton. Then Mr. Compton quietly rang the bell, and with a slight apology to Alfred requested Colls to search for the draft of Mrs. Holloway's will. Alfred continued. Mr. Compton listened keenly, noted the salient points on a sheet of brief-paper, and demanded the exact dates of every important event related.

The story finished, the attorney turned to Colls, and said mighty coolly, "You may go. The will is in my pocket: but I made sure he was a madman. They generally are, these ill-used clients." (Exit Colls.) "Got a copy of the settlement, sir, under which you take this ten thousand pounds?"

"No, sir."

"Any lawyer seen it?"

"Oh yes; Mr. Crauford, down at Barkington."

"Good. Friend of mine. I'll write to him. Names and addresses of your trustees?"

Alfred gave them.

"You have brought the order on which you were confined, and the two certificates?"

"Not I," said Alfred. "I have begged and prayed for a sight of them, and never could get one. That is one of the galling iniquities of the system; I call it 'THE DOUBLE SHUFFLE.' Just bring your mind to bear on this, sir: The prisoner whose wits and liberty have been signed away behind his back is not allowed to see the order and certificate on which he is confined — until *after* his release: that release he is to obtain by combating the statements in the order and certificates. So to get out he must first see and contradict the lies that put him in; but to see the lies that put him in, he must first get out. So runs the circle of Iniquity. Now, is that the injustice of Earth, or the injustice of Hell?"

Mr. Compton asked a moment to consider: "Well, I think it is of the earth, earthy. There's a mixture of idiocy in it the Devil might fairly repudiate. Young gentleman, the English Statutes of Lunacy are famous [illegible] latorial incapacity: and indeed, as

a general rule, if you want justice and wisdom, don't you go to Acts of Parliament, but to the Common Law of England."

Alfred did not appreciate this observation: he made no reply to it, but inquired, with some heat, "what he could do to punish the whole gang; his father, the certifying doctors, and the madhouse keepers?"

"Humph! You might indict them all for a conspiracy," said Mr. Compton; "but you would be defeated. As a rule, avoid criminal proceedings where you have a civil remedy. A jury will give a verdict and damages where they would not convict on the same evidence. Yours is just one of those cases where Temper says, 'indict!' but Prudence says, 'sue!' and Law, through John Compton, its oracle in this square, says, sue the defendant and no other. Now, who is the true defendant here, or party liable in law?"

"The keeper of the asylum, for one."

"No. If I remember right, all proceedings against him are expressly barred by a provision in the last statute. Let us see."

He took down the statutes of the realm, and showed Alfred the clause, which raises the proprietor of a madhouse above the civic level of a Prince Royal. "Curse the law," said Alfred bitterly.

"No, don't curse the Law. Curse the Act if you like; but we can't get on without the Law, neither of us. Try again."

"The certifying doctor, sir?"

"Humph!" said Mr. Compton, knitting his brows: "a jury might give you a verdict. But it would probably be set aside by the full court, or else by a court of error. For, unless you could prove informality,

barefaced negligence, or mala fides, what does it come to? A professional man, bound to give medical opinions to all comers, is consulted about you, and says he thinks you are insane; you turn out sane. Well, then he was mistaken: but not more than he is in most of his professional opinions. We lawyers know what guess-work Medicine is: we see it in the witness-box. I hate suing opinions: it is like firing bullets at snipes in a wind. Try again."

Alfred groaned. "Why there is nobody left but the rogue who signed the order."

"And, if you were a lawyer, that alone would tell you he is the defendant. Where a legal wrong has been committed by A. B. and C., and there is no remedy against A. or B., there must either be one against C., or none at all: but this Law abhors as Nature does a vacuum. Besides this defendant has *done* the wrong complained of. In his person you sue an act, not an opinion. But of course you are not cool enough to see all this just at first."

"Cool, sir," said Alfred, despairingly; "I am frozen with your remorseless law. What, of all these villains, may I only attack one, and can't I imprison even him, as he has me? Such narrow law encourages men to violence, who burn under wrongs like mine."

Mr. Compton looked keenly at his agitated, mortified client, but made no concession. He gave him a minute to digest the law's first bitter pill: and then said, "If I am to act for you, you had better write a line to the Commissioners of Lunacy requesting them to hand me copies of the order and certificates." Alfred wrote it.

"And now," said Mr. Compton, thoughtfully, "I

don't think they will venture to recapture you during the fourteen days. But still they might: and we attorneys are wary animals. So please give me at once a full authority to act under advice of counsel for your protection."

Alfred wrote as requested, and Mr. Compton put the paper in his drawer, remarking, "With this I can proceed by law or equity, even should you get into the asylum again." He then dismissed Alfred somewhat abruptly, but with an invitation to call again after three clear days. Like most ardent suitors after their first interview with passionless law, he went away sadly chilled, and so home to his cheerless lodging, to count the hours till he could see Julia, and learn his fate from her lips.

This very morning a hasty note came to Edward from Folkestone, worded thus:

"Oh, Edward: my worst misgivings! The two have parted. Poor papa has taken a man's boat and is in sight. We shall follow directly in a steam-boat. But the other! You know my fears; you must be father and mother to that poor child till I come home.

"Your sad mother,

"Lucy Dodd."

Julia held out her hand for the note. Edward put it in his pocket.

"What is that for?" said the young lady.

"Why surely I may put my own property in my pocket."

"Oh, certainly. I only want to look at it."

"Excuse me."

"Are you in earnest, Edward? Not let me see dear mamma's letter!" and the vivid face looked piteously surprised.

"Oh, I'll tell you the contents. Papa had got to Folkestone and taken a boat, and gone to sea: then mamma took a steam-boat and after him: so she will soon catch him, and is not that a comfort?"

"Oh, yes," cried Julia, and was for some time too interested and excited to think of anything else. But presently she returned to the charge. "Anything else, dear?"

"Humph? Well, not of equal importance."

"Oh, if it is of no importance, there can be no reason for not telling me. What was it?"

Edward coloured but said nothing. He thought however: and thus ran his thoughts: "She's my intellectual superior; and I've got to deceive her; and a nice mess I shall make of it."

"It *is* of importance," said Julia, eyeing him. "You have told a story: and you don't love your sister." This fulminated, she drew herself up proudly and was silent. A minute afterwards, stealing at look at her, he saw her eyes suddenly fill with tears, apropos of nothing tangible.

"Now this is nice," said he to himself.

At noon she put on her bonnet to visit her district. He put on his hat directly, and accompanied her. Great was her innocent pleasure at that; it was the first time he had done her the honour. She took him to her poor people, and showed him off with innocent pride.

"Hannah, this is my brother." Then in a whisper,

"Isn't he beautiful?" Presently she saw him looking pale; unheard of phenomenon! "There now, you are ill," said she. "Come home directly, and be nursed."

"No, no," said he. "I only want a little fresh air. What horrid places! what horrid sights and smells! I say, you must have no end of pluck to face them."

"No, no, no. Dearest, I pray for strength: that is how I manage. And oh, Edward, you used to think the poor were not to be pitied. But now you see."

"Yes, I see, and smell and all. You are a brave, good girl. Got any salts about you?"

"Yes, of course. There. But fancy a young lion smelling salts."

"A young duffer, you mean; that has passed for game through the thing not being looked into close."

"Oh, you can be close enough, where I want you to be open."

No answer.

The next day he accompanied her again, but remained at the stair-foot while she went in to her patients; and, when she came down, asked her, Could no good Christian be found to knock that poor woman on the head who lived in a plate.

"No good Heathen, you mean," said Julia.

"Why yes," said he; "the savages manage these things better."

He also accompanied her shopping, and smoking phlegmatically outside the shops; nor could she exhaust his patience. Then the quick girl put this and that together. When they were at home again and her bonnet off, she looked him in the face and said

sweetly, "I have got a watch-dog." He smiled, and said nothing. "Why don't you answer?" cried Julia impetuously.

"Because least said is soonest mended. Besides, I'm down upon you: you decoy me into a friendly conversation, and then you say biting things directly."

"If I bite you, you sting me. Such want of confidence! Oh how cruel! how cruel! Why can you not trust me? Am I a child? No one is young, who has suffered what I have suffered. Secrets disunite a family: and we were so united. And then you are so stupid; *you* keep a secret? Yes, like a dog in a chain; you can't hide it one bit. You have undertaken a task you are not fit for, sir; to hide a secret you must be able to tell fibs: and you can't: not for want of badness, but cleverness to tell them smoothly; you know it, you know it; and so out of your abominable slyness you won't say a word. There, it is no use my trying to provoke him. I wish you were not so good tempered; so apathetic I mean, of course." Then, with one of her old rapid transitions, she began to caress him and fawn on him: she seated him in an arm chair and herself on a footstool, and suddenly curling round his neck, murmured, "Dear, dear brother, have pity on a poor girl, and tell her is there any news that I have a right to hear, only mamma has given you your orders not to tell me; tell me, love!" This last in an exquisite whisper.

"Let me alone, you little fascinating demon," said he, angrily. "Ask mamma. I won't tell you a word."

"Thank you!" she cried, bounding to her feet; "you *have* told me. He is alive. He loves me still.

He was bewitched, seduced, deluded. He has come to himself. Mamma has seen him. He wants to come and beg my pardon. But you are all afraid I shall forgive him. But I will not, for at the first word I'll stop his mouth, and say, 'If you were happy away from me, I suppose you would not have come back.'" And instantly she burst out singing, with inspired eloquence and defiance,

"Castles are sacked in war,
Chieftains are scattered far,
Truth is a fixed star.
Aileen aroon."

But, unable to sustain it, the poor Impetuosity drooped as quickly as she had mounted, and out went her arm on the table and her forehead sank on her arm, and the tears began to run silently down the sweet face, so brave for a moment.

"W—will y—you allow me to light a cigar?" faltered Edward. "I'm wretched and miserable; you Tempest in petticoats, you!"

She made him a sign of assent with the hand that was dangling languidly, but she did not speak; nor did she appeal to him any more. Alienation was commencing. But what was worse than speaking her mind, she was for ever at the window now, looking up and down the street; and walking with her he felt her arm often tremble, and sometimes jerk. The secret was agitating her nerves, and destroying her tranquillity as much, or perhaps more, than if she had known all.

Mrs. Dodd wrote from Portsmouth: whereof anon.

Mr. Peterson called, and soon after him Mr. Hurd.

Edward was glad to see them, especially the latter, whose visits seemed always to do Julia good.

Moreover, as Peterson and Hurd were rivals, it afforded Edward an innocent amusement to see their ill-concealed aversion to one another, and the admirable address and delicacy with which his sister conducted herself between them.

However this pastime was cut hort by Sarah coming in and saying, "There's a young man wants to see you sir."

Julia looked up and changed colour.

"I think he is a fireman," said Sarah. She knew very well he was a fireman, and also one of her followers. Edward went out and found one of his late brethren, who told him a young gentleman had just been inquiring for him at the station.

"What was he like?"

"Why I was a good ways off, but I saw he was a tall one."

"Six feet?"

"Full that."

"Give you his name?"

"No. I didn't speak to him: it was Andrew. Andrew says he asked if there was a fireman called Dodd: so Andrew said you had left; then the swell asked where you lived, and Andrew couldn't tell him any more than it was in Pembroke Street. So I told him, says I, 'Why couldn't you call me? It is number sixty-six,' says I. 'Oh, he is coming back,' says Andrew. However, I thought I'd come and tell you." (And so got a word with Sarah, you sly dog.)

Edward thanked him, and put on his hat directly,

for he could not disguise from himself that this visitor might be Alfred Hardie. Indeed, what more likely?

Messrs. Hurd and Peterson always tried to stay one another out whenever they met at 66, Pembroke Street. However, to make sure of not leaving Julia alone, Edward went in and asked them both to luncheon, at which time he said he should be back.

As he walked rapidly to the station he grew more and more convinced that it was Alfred Hardie. And his reflections ran like this. "What a head-piece mamma has! But it did not strike her he would come to me first. Yet how plain that looks now: for of course I'm the duffer's only clue to Julia. These madmen are no fools though. And how quiet he was that night! And he made papa go down the ladder first: that was the old Alfred Hardie; he was always generous: vain, overbearing, saucy, but noble with it all. I liked him: he was a man that showed you his worst, and let you find his best out by degrees. He hated to be beat: but that's no crime. He was a beautiful oar: and handled his mawleys uncommon; he sparred with all the prizefighters that came to Oxford, and took punishment better than you would think; and a wonderful quick hitter; Alec Reed owned that. Poor Taff Hardie! And when I think that God has overthrown his powerful mind, and left me mine, such as it is! But the worst is my having gone on calling him 'the Wretch' all this time: and nothing too bad for him. I ought to be ashamed of myself. It grieves me very much. 'When found make a note on;' never judge a fellow behind his back again."

Arrived at the station, he inquired whether his friend had called again, and was answered in the ne-

gative. He waited a few minutes, and then, with the superintendent's permission, wrote a note to Alfred, inviting him to dine at Simpson's at six, and left it with the firemen. This done, he was about to return home, when another thought struck him. He got a messenger, and sent off a single line to Dr. Wolf, to tell him Alfred Hardie would be at Simpson's at seven o'clock.

But, when the messenger was gone, he regretted what he had done. He had done it for Alfred's good; but still it was treason. He felt unhappy, and wended his way homeward disconsolately, realising more and more that he had not brains for the difficulties imposed upon him.

On entering Pembroke Street he heard a buzz. He looked up, and saw a considerable crowd collected in a semicircle. "Why that is near our house," he said and quickened his steps.

When he got near he saw that all the people's eyes were bent on No. 66.

He dashed into the crowd. "What on earth is the matter?" he cried.

"The matter? Plenty's the matter, young man," cried one.

"Murder's the matter," said another.

At that he turned pale as death. An intelligent man saw his violent agitation, and asked him hurriedly if he belonged to the house.

"Yes. For mercy's sake what is it?"

"Make way there!" shouted the man. "He belongs. Sir, a madman has broke loose and got into your house. And I'm sorry to say he has just killed two men."

"With a pistol," cried several voices, speaking together.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALFRED HARDIE spent three days writhing in his little lodging. His situation had been sadder, but never more irritating. By right possessor of thousands, yet in fact reduced to one suit, two shirts, and half-a-crown: rich in intellect, yet hunted as a madman: affianced to the loveliest girl in England, yet afraid to go near her for fear of being torn from her again, and for ever. All this could last but one week more; but a week's positive torture was no trifle to contemplate, with a rival at his Julia's ear all the time. Suppose she should have been faithful all these months, but in this last week should be worn out and give herself to another: such things had been known. He went to Lincoln's Inn with this irritating fear tearing him like a vulture. Mr. Compton received him cheerfully, and told him he had begun operations in Hardie versus Hardie: had written to Thomas Hardie two days ago, and inquired his London solicitor, and whether that gentleman would accept service of the writ in Hardie versus Hardie.

"To Thomas Hardie? Why, what has he to do with it?" asked Alfred.

"He is the defendant in the suit." Then seeing amazement and incredulity on Alfred's face, he explained that the Commissioners of Lunacy had treated him with great courtesy; had at once furnished him with copies, not only of the order and certificates, but

of other valuable documents. "And there," said he, "lies the order; signed by Thomas Hardie, of Clare Court, Yorkshire."

"Curse his impudence," cried Alfred in a fury: "why, sir, he is next door to an idiot himself."

"What does that matter? Ah, now, if I had gone in a passion and indicted him, there would be a defence directly; 'no malice, defendant being non compos.' Whereas, by gently, quietly suing him, even if he was a lunatic we would make him or his estate pay a round sum for falsely imprisoning a sane Briton. By-the-by, here is counsel's opinion on your case," and he handed him a short opinion of a distinguished Queen's Counsel, the concluding words of which were these:

3. If the certificates and order are in legal form, and were made and given bonâ fide, no action lies for the capture or detention of Mr. Hardie.

"Why it is dead against me," said Alfred. "There goes the one rotten reed you had left me."

"Singularly dead," said the attorney, coolly: "he does not even say 'I am of opinion.' He is in great practice, and hard-worked: in his hurry he has taken up the Lunacy Acts, and has forgotten that the rights of sane Englishmen are not the creatures of these little trumpery statutes; no, thank you; our rights are centuries older, and prevail wherever, by good luck, the statutes of the realm are silent; now they are all silent about incarcerating sane men. Besides, he gives no cases. What is an opinion without a precedent? a lawyer's guess. I thought so little of his opinion that I sent the case to a clever junior, who has got time to think before he writes." Colls entered soon after with the said junior's opinion. Mr. Campton opened it, and

saying, "Now let us see what *he* says," read it to Alfred. It ran thus:

"There was clearly a right of action under the common law: and it has been exercised. *Anderdon* v. *Brothers; Paternoster* v. *Wynn*, &c. Such a right can only be annulled by the express terms of a statute: now the 8 and 9 Victoria, cap. 100, sect. 99, so annuls it as against the madhouse proprietor only. That, therefore, is the statutory exception, and tends to confirm the common right. If the facts are as represented (on which, of course, I can form no opinion), Mr. Hardie can safely sue the person who signed the order for his alleged false imprisonment.

"I agree with you that the usual course by praying the Court of Chancery for a Commission de Lunatico Inquirendo, is timorous, and rests on prejudice. Plt., if successful, is saddled with his own costs, and sometimes with Deft.'s, and obtains no compensation. It seems clear that a jury sitting at Nisi Prius can deal as well with the main fact as can a jury sitting by the order of the Chancellor; and I need not say the costs will go with their verdict, to say nothing of the damages, which may be heavy. On the other hand, an indictment is hazardous; and I think you can lose nothing by beginning with the suit. By having a shorthand writer at the trial, you may collect materials for an indictment, and also feel the pulse of the court; you can then confer upon the evidence with some counsel better versed in criminal law than myself. *My* advice is to sue Thomas Hardie; and declare in Tort.

(Signed) "BARROW.

"N.B. — I have been thus particular, because Hardie v. Hardie (if carried to a verdict) will probably be a leading case."

"Who shall decide when counsel disagree?" inquired Alfred, satirically.

"That depends on where they do it. If in court, the judge. If here, the attorney."

"You appear sanguine, Mr. Compton," said Alfred: "perhaps you would not mind advancing me a little money. I've only half-a-crown."

"It is all ready for you in this drawer," said Compton, cheerfully. "See, thirty sovereigns. Then you need not go to a bank."

"What, you thought I should borrow?"

"Don't all my clients begin by bleeding *me?* it is the rule of this office."

"Then why don't you give up business?"

"Because I bleed the opposite attorney's client a little more than my own bleeds me."

He then made Alfred sign a promissory note for the thirty pounds: advised him to keep snug for one week more, and promised to write to him in two days, and send Thomas Hardie's answer. Alfred left his address and went from Mr. Compton a lighter man. Convinced of his courage and prudence, he shifted one care off his own shoulders: and thought of love alone.

But, strange as it may appear, two cares are sometimes better for a man than one. Alfred, having now no worry to divert him from his deeper anxiety, was all love and jealousy; and quite overbalanced: the desire of his heart grew so strong it overpowered alike

his patience, and his prudence. He jumped into a cab, and drove to all the firemen's stations on the Surrey side of the river, inquiring for Edward. At last he hit upon the right one, and learned that Julia lived in Pembroke Street; number unknown. He drove home to his lodgings: bought some ready-made clothes, and dressed like a gentleman; then told the cabman to drive to Pembroke Street. He knew he was acting imprudently; but he could not help it. And besides, Mr. Compton had now written to his uncle, and begun the attack: that would surely intimidate his enemies, and turn their thoughts to defence, not to fresh offence. However, catching sight of a gunsmith's shop on the way, he suddenly resolved to arm himself on the bare chance of an attack. He stopped the cab: went in and bought a double-barrelled pistol, with powder-flask, bullets, wads, and caps, complete. This he loaded in the cab, and felt quite prudent after it. The prudence of youth!

He paid off the cab in Pembroke Street, and set about the task of discovering Julia. He inquired at several houses, but was unsuccessful. Then he walked slowly all down the street, looking up at all the windows. And I think, if he had done this the day before, he might have seen her, or she him: she was so often at the window now. But just then she had company to keep her in order.

He was unlucky in another respect. Edward came out of No. 66 and went up the street, when he himself was going down it not so very many yards off. If Alfred's face had only been turned the other way, he would have seen Edward, and all would have gone differently.

The stoutest hearts have their moments of weakness and deep dejection. Few things are more certain, and less realised by ordinary men, than this; from Palissy fighting with Enamel to Layard disinterring a city, this thing is so.

Unable to find Julia in the very street she inhabited, Alfred felt weak against fate. He said to himself, "If I find her, I shall perhaps wish I had never sought her."

In his hour of dejection stern reason would be heard, and asked him whether all Mrs. Archbold had said could be pure invention; and he was obliged to confess that was too unlikely. Then he felt so sick at heart he was half minded to turn and fly the street. But there was a large yard close by him, entered by a broad and lofty gateway cut through one of the houses. The yard belonged to a dealer in hay: two empty waggons were there, but no men visible, being their dinner-time. Alfred slipped in here, and sat down on the shaft of a waggon: and let his courage ooze. He sighed, and sighed, and feared to know his fate. And so he sat with his face in his hands unmanned.

Presently a strain of music broke on his ear. It seemed to come from the street. He raised his head to listen. He coloured, his eyes sparkled; he stole out on tiptoe with wondering, inquiring, face into the street. Once there, he stood spell-bound, thrilling from his heart, that seemed now on fire, to his fingers' ends. For a heavenly voice was singing to the piano, just above his head; singing in earnest, making the very street ring. Already listeners were gathering, and a woman of the people said, "It's a soul singing

without a body;" amazing good things are said in the streets. The voice was the voice of Julia; the song was Aileen Aroon, the hymn of constancy. So sudden and full was the bliss, which poured into the long and sore tried listener at this sudden answer to his fears, that tears of joy trembled in his eyes. "Wretch that I was to doubt her," he said; and unable to contain his longing, unable to wait and listen even to that which had changed his grief and doubts into rapture, he was at the door in a moment. A servant opened it; "Miss Dodd?" he said, or rather panted: "you need not announce me. I am an old acquaintance." He could not bear any one should see the meeting between him and his beloved; he went up the steep and narrow stair, guided by the hymn of constancy.

He stopped at the door, his heart was beating so violently.

Then he turned the handle softly, and stepped into the drawing-room: it was a double room: he took two steps and was in the opening, and almost at Julia's back.

Two young clergymen were bending devotedly one on each side of her; it was to them she was singing the hymn of constancy.

Alfred started back as if he had been stung; and the music stopped dead short.

For she had heard his step, and, womanlike, was looking into her companions' eyes first, to see if her ear had deceived her. What she saw there brought her slowly round with a wild look. Her hands rose towards her face, and she shrank away sideways from him as if he was a serpent, and her dilated eyes

looked over her cringing shoulder at him, and she was pale and red and pale and red a dozen times in as many seconds.

He eyed her sorrowfully and sternly, taking for shame that strange mixture of emotions which possessed her. And so they met.

Strange meeting for two true lovers, who had parted last upon their wedding eve.

No doubt, if they had been alone, one or other would have spoken directly: but the situation was complicated by the presence of two rivals, and this tied their tongues, I think. They devoured one another with their eyes in silence; only Julia rose slowly to her feet, and began to tremble from head to foot, as she looked at him.

"Is this intrusion agreeable to you, Miss Dodd?" said Mr. Hurd, respectfully, by way of courting her. She made no reply: but only looked wildly at him still, and quivered visibly.

"Pray, sir," said Alfred, turning on Mr. Hurd, "have you any right to interfere between us two?"

"None whatever," said Julia, hastily. "Mr. Hurd, I need no one: I will permit no one to say a word to him. Mr. Hardie knows he cannot enter a house where I am — without an explanation."

"What, before a couple of curates?"

"Do not be insolent to my friends, sir," said Julia, panting.

This wounded Alfred deeply. "Oh, as you please," said he. "Only if you put me on my defence before strangers, I shall, perhaps, put you to the blush before them."

"Why do you come here, sir?" said Julia, not deigning to notice his threat.

"To see my betrothed."

"Oh, indeed! Then why have you postponed your visit so long?"

"I was in prison."

"In prison, Alfred?"

"In the worst of all prisons; where I was put because I loved you; where I was detained because I persisted in loving you, you faithless, inconstant girl."

He choked at these words; she smiled; a faint uncertain smile. It died away, and she shook her head, and said sadly:

"Defend yourself, and then call me as many names as you like. Where was this prison?"

"It was an asylum: a madhouse."

The girl stared at him bewildered. He put his hand into his pocket, and took Peggy's letter. "Read that," he said. She held it in her hand, and looked him in the face to divine the contents. "Read it," said he, almost fiercely: "that was the decoy." She held it shaking in her hands, and stared at it. I don't know whether she read it not.

He went on: "The same villain who defrauded your father of his money, robbed me of my wife, and my liberty: that Silverton House was a lunatic asylum, and ever since then (oh Julia, the agony of that day) I have been confined in one or other of those hells; sane amongst the mad; till Drayton House took fire, and I escaped: for what? To be put on my defence by you. What have you suffered from our separation, compared with the manifold anguish I have endured,

that you dare to receive the most injured and constant of mankind like this, you, who have had your liberty all this time, and have consoled yourself for my absence with a couple of curates?"

"For shame!" said Julia, blushing to the forehead, yet smiling in a way her companions could not understand.

"Miss Dodd, will you put up with these insults?" said Mr. Hurd.

"Ay, and a thousand more," cried Julia, radiant, "and thank Heaven for them; they prove his sincerity. You, who have thought proper to stay and hear *me* insult my betrothed, and put my superior on his defence, look how I receive his just rebuke: dear, cruelly used Alfred, I never doubted you in my heart, no not for a moment; forgive me for taunting you to clear yourself; you who were always the soul of truth and honour. Forgive me: I too have suffered; for I thought my Alfred was dead. Forgive me."

And with this she was sinking slowly to her knees with the most touching grace, all blushes, tears, penitence, happiness, and love; but he caught her eagerly. "Oh! God forbid," he cried: and in a moment her head was on his shoulder, and they mingled their tears together.

It was Julia who recovered herself first, and shrank from him a little, and murmured, "We are not alone."

The misgiving came rather late: and they were alone.

The other gentlemen had comprehended at last that it was indelicate to remain: they had melted quietly away; and Peterson rushed down the street;

but Hurd hung disconsolate about the very entry, where Alfred had just desponded before him.

"Sit by me, my poor darling, and tell me all," said Julia.

He began; but, ere he had told her about his first day at his first asylum, she moaned and turned faint at the recital, and her lovely head sank on his shoulder. He kissed her, and tried to comfort her, and said he would not tell her any more. But she said somewhat characteristically, "I insist on your telling me all; all. It will kill me." Which did not seem to Alfred a cogent reason for continuing his narrative. He varied it by telling her that through all his misery the thought of her had sustained him.

A rough voice was heard in the passage inquiring for Mr. Hardie. Alfred started up in dismay: for it was Rooke's voice. "I am undone," he cried. "They are coming to take me again; and, if they do, they will drug me; I am a dead man."

"Fly!" cried Julia; "fly! up-stairs; the leads."

He darted to the door, and out on the landing.

It was too late. Rooke had just turned the corner of the stairs; and saw him. He whistled and rushed after Alfred. Alfred bounded up the next flight of stairs: but, even as he went, his fighting blood got up; he remembered his pistol: he drew it, turned on the upper landing, and levelled the weapon full at Rooke's forehead. The man recoiled with a yell, and got to a respectful distance on the second landing. There he began to parley. "Come, Mr. Hardie, sir," said he, "that is past a joke: would you murder a man?"

"It's no murder to kill an assassin in defence of life or liberty: and I'll kill you, Rooke, as I would kill a wasp, if you lay a finger on me."

"Do you hear that?" shouted Rooke to some one below.

"Ay, I hear," replied the voice of Hayes.

"Then loose him. And run in after him."

There was a terrible silence; then a scratching was heard below: and, above, the deadly click of the pistol-hammers brought to full cock.

And then there was a heavy pattering rush, and Vulcan came charging up the stairs like a lion. He was half-muzzled; but that Alfred did not know: he stepped forward and fired at the tremendous brute somewhat unsteadily; and missed him, by an inch; the bullet glanced off the stairs and entered the wall within a yard of Rooke's head; ere Alfred could fire again, the huge brute leaped on him, and knocked him down like a child, and made a grab at his throat; Alfred, with admirable presence of mind seized a banister, and, drawing himself up, put the pistol to Vulcan's ear, and fired the other barrel just as Rooke rushed up the stairs to secure his prisoner: the dog bounded into the air and fell over dead with shattered skull, leaving Alfred bespattered with blood and brains, and half blinded; but he struggled up, and tore the banister out in doing so, just as a heavy body fell forward at his feet: it was Rooke stumbling over Vulcan's carcase so unexpectedly thrown in his path: Alfred cleared his eyes with his hand, and as Rooke struggled up, lifted the banister high above his head, and, with his long sinewy arm and elastic body, discharged a blow frightful to look at, for youth, strength, skill,

and hate all swelled, and rose, and struck together in that one furious gesture. If the wood had held, the skull must have gone. As it was, the banister broke over the man's head (and one half went spinning up to the ceiling); the man's head cracked under the banister like a glass bottle; and Rooke lay flat and mute, with the blood running from his nose and ears. Alfred hurled the remnant of the banister down at Hayes and the others, and darted into a room (it was Julia's bed-room), and was heard to open the window, and then drag furniture to the door, and barricade it. This done, he went to load his pistol, which he thought he had slipped into his pocket after felling Rooke. He found to his dismay it was not there. The fact was, it had slipped past his pocket and fallen down.

During the fight, shriek upon shriek issued from the drawing-room. But now all was still. On the stairs lay Vulcan dead, Rooke senseless: below, Julia in a dead faint. And all in little more than a minute.

Dr. Wolf arrived with the police and two more keepers, new ones in the place of Wales and Garrett discharged; and urged them to break into the bedroom and capture the maniac: but first he was cautious enough to set two of them to watch the back of the house. "There," he said, "where that load of hay is going in; that is the way to it. Now stand you in the yard and watch."

This last mandate was readily complied with; for there was not much to be feared on the stones below from a maniac self-immured on the second story. But to break open that bedroom door was quite another thing. The stairs were like a shambles already, a chilling sight to the eyes of mercenary valour.

Rooke was but just sensible: the others hung back. But presently the pistol was found sticking in a pool of gore. This put a new face on the matter; and Dr. Wolf himself showed the qualities of a commander. He sent down word to his sentinels in the yard to be prepared for any attempt on Alfred's part, however desperate: and he sent a verbal message to a stately gentleman who was sitting anxious in lodgings over the way, after bribing high and low, giving out money like water to secure the recapture, and so escape what he called his unnatural son's vengeance; for he knew him to be by nature bold and vindictive like himself. After these preliminaries, Doctor Wolf headed his remaining forces, to wit, two keepers, and two policemen, and thundered at the bedroom door, and summoned Alfred to surrender.

Now among the spectators who watched and listened with bated breath, was one to whom this scene had an interest of its own. Mr. Hurd, disconcerted by Alfred's sudden reappearance, and the lovers' reconciliation, had hung about the entry very miserable: for he was sincerely attached to Julia. But, while he was in this stupor, came the posse to recapture Alfred, and he heard them say so. Then the shots were fired within, then Wolf and his men got in, and Mr. Hurd, who was now at the door, got in with them to protect Julia, and see this dangerous and inconvenient character disposed of. He was looking demurely on at a safish distance, when his late triumphant rival was summoned to surrender.

No reply.

Dr. Wolf coaxed.

No reply.

Dr. Wolf told him he had police as well as keepers, and resistance would be idle.

No reply.

Dr. Wolf ordered his men to break in the door.

After some little delay, one of the keepers applied a chisel, while a policeman held his truncheon ready to defend the operator. The lock gave way. But the door could not open for furniture.

After some further delay they took it off its hinges, and the room stood revealed.

To their surprise no rush was made at them.

The maniac was not even in sight.

"He is down upon his luck," whispered one of the new keepers: "we shall find him crouched somewhere." They looked under the bed. He was not there. They opened a cupboard: three or four dresses hung from wooden pegs; they searched the gown most minutely: but found no maniac hid in their ample folds. Presently some soot was observed lying in the grate: and it was inferred he had gone up the chimney.

On inspection the opening appeared almost too narrow. Then Dr. Wolf questioned his sentinels in the yard. "Have you been there all the time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Seen nothing?"

"No, sir. And our eyes have never been off the window and the leads."

Here was a mystery: and not a clue to its solution. The window was open: but five-and-twenty feet above the paved yard: had he leaped down he must have been dashed to pieces.

Many tongues began to go at once: in the midst

of which Edward burst in, and found the two dead men of contemporary history consisted of a dead dog, and a stunned man, who, having a head like a bullet, was now come to himself and vowing vengeance. He found Julia very pale, supported and consoled by Mr. Hurd. He was congratulating her on her escape from a dangerous maniac.

She rose and tottered away from him to her brother and clung to him. He said what he could to encourage her, then deposited her in an arm-chair and went upstairs; he soon satisfied himself Alfred was not in the house. On this he requested Dr. Wolf and his men to leave the premises. The doctor demurred. Edward insisted, and challenged him to show a magistrate's warrant for entering a private house. The doctor was obliged to own he had none. Edward then told the policemen they were engaged in an illegal act; the police were forbidden by Act of Parliament to take part in these captures. Now the police knew that very well: but, being handsomely bribed, they had presumed, and not for the first time, upon that ignorance of law which is deemed an essential part of a private citizen's accomplishments in modern days. In a word, by temper and firmness, and a smattering of law gathered from the omniscient 'Tiser, Edward cleared his castle of the lawless crew. But they paraded the street, and watched the yard till dusk, when its proprietor ran rusty and turned them out.

Julia sat between Edward and Mr. Hurd, with her head thrown back and her eyes closed: and received in silence their congratulations on her escape. She was thinking of his. When they had quite done, she opened her eyes and said, "Send for Dr. Sampson.

Nobody else knows anything. Oh pray, pray, pray send for Dr. Sampson."

Mr. Hurd said he would go for Dr. Sampson.

She thanked him warmly.

Then she crept away to her bedroom, and locked herself in, and sat on the hearth-rug, and thought, and thought, and recalled every word and tone of her Alfred; comparing things old and new.

Dr. Sampson was a few miles out of town, visiting a patient. It was nine o'clock in the evening when he got Julia's note; but he came on to Pembroke Street at once. Dr. Wolf and his men had retired leaving a sentinel in the street, on the bare chance of Alfred returning. Dr. Sampson found brother and sister sitting sadly, but lovingly together. Julia rose upon his entrance. "Oh, Doctor Sampson! Now *is* he — what they say he is?"

"How can I tell, till I see 'm?" objected the doctor.

"But you know they call people mad who are nothing of the kind: for you said so."

Sampson readily assented to this. "Why it was but last year a surjin came to me with one Jackson, a tailor, and said, 'Just sign a certificate for this man: his wife's mad.' 'Let me see her,' sid I. 'What for,' sis he; 'when her own husband applies.' 'Excuse me,' sis I, 'I'm not a bat, I'm Saampson.' I went to see her; she was nairvous and excited; 'Oh, I know what you come about,' said she. 'But you are mistaken.' I questioned her kindly, and she told me her husband was a great trile t' her nairves. I refused to sign: on that disn't the tailor drown himself in the canal nixt day? He was the madman; and she knew it all the

time, but wouldn't tell us: and that's a woman all over."

"Well then," said Julia hopefully.

"Ay but," said Sampson, "these cases are exceptions, after all: and the chances are nine to one he's mad. Daun't ye remember that was one of the solutions I offered ye, when he levanted on his wedding-day?" He added satirically, "And couldn't all that logic keep in a little reason?"

This cynical speech struck Julia to the heart: she could not bear it: and retired to her own room.

Then Dr. Sampson saw his mistake, and said to Edward, with some concern, "Mairey on us, she is not in love with him still, is she? I thought that young parson was the man now."

Edward shook his head: but declined to go much into a topic so delicate as his sister's affections: and just then an alarming letter was delivered from Mrs. Dodd. She wrote to the effect that David, favoured by the wind, had run into Portsmouth harbour before their eyes, and had disappeared, hidden, it was feared, by one of those low publicans, who provide bad ships with sailors, receiving a commission. On this an earnest conversation between Sampson and Edward.

It was interrupted in its turn.

Julia burst suddenly into the room, pale and violently excited, clasping her hands and crying, "He is *there*. His voice is like a child's. Oh, help me! He is hurt. He is dying."

CHAPTER IX.

JULIA, as I have said, went to her own room, wounded unintentionally by a chance speech: she sat down sick at heart; and presently opened her window and looked out upon the starry night, and wondered where Alfred was now; that Alfred for whom nobody else had a human heart, it seemed. "Alfred! my poor Alfred!" she sighed, and half-expected to hear him reply. Then she said to herself, "They all called you false but me; yet I was right: and now they all call you mad; but not I: I believe nothing against you. You are my own Alfred still. Where have the wretches driven you to?" At this her feelings carried her away, and she cried aloud on him despairingly, and leaned upon the window-sill, and the tears ran fast for him.

Presently out of the silence of the night seemed to struggle a faint but clear voice:

"Julia!"

She started, and a muffled scream came from her. Then she listened, all trembling. Again the voice sighed, faintly but clear, "Julia!"

"Alfred?" said she, quavering.

"Yes. Pray be cautious; give no alarm. The house is watched; bring Edward."

She flew down stairs, and electrified Edward and Sampson with the news. "Oh, promise me not to betray him!" she cried.

"Hut!" said the doctor, starting to his feet, "what should we betray him for? I'll cure him for you. I can cure any lunatic that has lucid intervals. Where is he?"

"Follow me," gasped Julia. "Stay. I'll get rid of the servants first. I'll not play the fool, and betray him to his enemies." She sent Sarah eastward, and Jane westward, and then led the way through the kitchen door into the yard.

They all searched about, and found nothing. Then Julia begged them to be silent. She whispered, "Alfred!" And instantly a faint voice issued from the top of a waggon laden with hay and covered with a tarpaulin. "Julia!"

They all stood staring.

"Who are those with you?" asked Alfred uneasily.

"Only friends, dear! Edward and Dr. Sampson."

"Ned, old fellow," groaned Alfred, "you pulled me out of the fire; won't you help me out of this? I think my leg is broken."

At this Julia wrung her hands, and Edward ran into the house for his rope, and threw it over the waggon. He told Julia and Sampson to hold on by one end, and seizing the other, was up on the waggon in a moment. He felt about till he came to a protuberance; and that was Alfred under the tarpaulin, in which he had cut breathing-holes with his penknife. Edward sent Julia in for a carving-knife, and soon made an enormous slit: through this a well-known figure emerged into the moonlight, and seemed wonderfully tall to have been so hidden. His hands being uninjured, he easily descended the rope, and stood on one leg holding it. Then Sampson and Edward put each an arm under his, and helped him into the house.

After the body the mind. That is the rule throughout *creation*. They examined, not his reason, but his

leg. Julia stood by with clasped hands, and a face beaming with pity and anxiety, that repaid his pain. Sampson announced there were no bones broken, but a bad sprain, and the limb very red and swollen. "Now," inquired he briskly of the company, "what is the practice in sprains? Why, leeches and cold water."

Edward offered at once to run and get them.

"Are ye mad?" was the reply. "Daun't I tell ye that is the *practice?* And isn't the practice sure to be th' opposite of the remedy? So get water as hot as he can bear it, and no leeches."

Julia remonstrated angrily. "Is this a case for jesting?"

"Deevil a jest in it," replied the doctor. "Well then, if ye must know, th' opera-dancers apply hot water to sprains: now what is their interest? t' expedite the cure: and the faculty apply cold water: and what is their interest? to procrastinate the cure, and make a long job of it. So just hold your tongues, and ring for hot water."

Julia did not ring; she beckoned Edward, and they flew out and soon brought a foot-pan of hot water. Edward then removed Alfred's shoes and stockings, and Julia bared her lovely arms, and blushed like a rose.

Alfred divined her intention. "Dear Julia," he said, "I won't let you: that is too high an honour. Sarah can do that."

But Julia's blood was up. "Sarah?" said she contemptuously; "she is too heavy handed: and — hold your tongue; I don't take my orders from you;" then more humbly to the doctor, "I am a district visitor: I

nurse all manner of strangers, and he says I must leave his poor suffering leg to the servants."

"Unnatural young monster," said the doctor, affecting horror. "G'im a good nip."

Julia followed this advice by handling Alfred's swollen ankle with a tenderness so exquisite, and pressing it with the full sponge so softly, that her divine touch soothed him as much or more than the water. After nursing him into the skies a minute or two, she looked up blushing in his face, and said coaxingly, "Are you mad, dear Alfred? Don't be afraid to tell us the truth! The madder you are, the more you need me to take care of you, you know."

Alfred smiled at this sapient discourse, and said he was not the least mad, and hoped to take care of her as soon as his ankle was well enough. This closed that sweet mouth of hers exceeding tight, and her face was seen no more for a while, but hid by bending earnestly over her work; only as her creamy poll turned pink, the colour of that hidden face was not hard to divine.

Then Edward asked Alfred how in the world he had escaped, and got into that waggon. The thing was incredible. "Mirawculous," said Dr. Sampson in assent.

"No," said Alfred, "it looks stranger to you than it is. The moment I found my pistol was gone I determined to run. I looked down and saw a spout with a great ornamental mouth, almost big enough to sit on; and, while I was looking greedily at it, three horses came into the yard drawing a load of hay. The waggoner was busy clearing the pavement with his wheel, and the waggon almost stopped a moment right

under me. There was a lot of loose hay on the top. I let myself down, and hung by the spout a moment, and then leaped on to the loose hay. Unfortunately there were the hard trusses beneath it, and so I got my sprain. Oh, I say, didn't it hurt? However, I crept under the hay and hid myself, and saw Wolf's men come into the yard. By-and-by a few drops of rain fell, and some fellows chucked down a tarpaulin from the loft, and nearly smothered me: so I cut a few air-holes with my penknife. And there I lay, Heaven knows how long: it seemed two days. At last I saw an angel at a window; I called her by the name she bears on earth: to my joy she answered, and here I am, as happy as a prince among you all, and devilish hungry."

"What a muff I was not to think of that," said Edward, and made for the larder.

"Dear doctor," said Julia, lifting a Madonna-like face with swimming eyes, "I see no change in him: he is very brave, and daring, and saucy. But so he always was. To be sure he says extravagant things, and stares one out of countenance with his eyes: well and so he always did — ever since *I* knew him."

"Mayn't I even *look* my gratitude?" whined Alfred.

"Yes, but you need not stare it."

"It's your own fault, Miss Julee," said Sampson. "While ye're fomenting his sprain the creature's fomenting his own insensate passion. Break every bone in a puppy's body, and it's a puppy still; and it doesn't do to spoil puppies; as ye're spoiling this one. Nlist me, ye vagabin. Take your eyes off the lady; and look me in the face — if ye can; and tell me

how you came to leave us all in the lurch on your wedding morn."

Julia looked up. "It was not his fault, poor thing: he was decoyed away after that miserable money. Ah, you may laugh at me for hating money; but have I not good reason to hate it?"

"Whist, whist, y' impetuous cracter; and let him tell his own tale."

Alfred thus invited, delivered one of his calm, luminous statements; which had hitherto been listened to so coldly by one official after another. But the effect was mighty different, falling now on folk not paid to pity. As for Dr. Sampson, he bounced up very early in the narrative, and went striding up and down the room; he was pale with indignation; and his voice trembled with emotion, and every now and then he broke in on the well-governed narrative with oaths and curses, and observations of this kind: "Why dinnt ye kill um? I'd have killed um. I'd just have taken the first knife and killed um. Man, our Liberty is our Life. Dith to whoever attacks it!"

And so Edward, coming in with Alfred's dinner on a tray, found the soi-disant maniac delivering his wrongs with the lofty serenity of an ancient philosopher discussing the wrongs of another, Julia crying furtively into the tub, and the good physician trampling and raving about the room, like what the stoical narrator was accused of being. Edward stopped and looked at them all over the tray. "Well," said he, "if there's a madman in the room, it is not Hardie. Ahem."

"Madman? ye young ijjit," roared the doctor, "he is no madder than I am."

"Heaven forbid," said Alfred drily.

"No madder than *you* are, ye young Pump." This to Edward. "That's an ungenerous skit on his profession," said the maniac.

"Be quite now, chattering," said the excited doctor; "I tell ye ye niver were mad, and niver will be. It's just the most heartless imposture, the most rascally fraud I've ever caught the Mad Ox out in. Ill expose it. Gimme pninkpapr. Man, they'll take y' again if we don't mind. But I'll stop that: these ineequities can only be done in the dark. I'll shed the light of day on 'em. Eat your dinner, and hold your tongue a minute — if ye can." The doctor had always a high sense of Alfred's volubility.

He went to work, and soon produced a letter headed "PRIVATE MADHOUSES." In this he related pithily Alfred's incarceration, and the present attempt to recapture him, with the particulars of his escape. "That will interest th' enemy," said he drily. He vouched for Alfred's sanity at both dates, and pledged himself to swear to it in a court of law. He then inquired what it availed to have sent one tyrant to Phalaris and another to Versailles in defence of our Liberty, since after all that Liberty lies grovelling at the mercy of Dr. Pill-box, and Mr. Sawbones, and a single designing relative? Then he drew a strong picture of this free-born British citizen skulking and hiding at this moment from a gang of rogues and conspirators, who, in France and other civilised countries that brag less of liberty than we do, would be themselves flying as criminals from the officers of justice; and he wound up with a warm appeal to the press to cast its shield over the victim of bad laws and foul

practices. "In England," said he, "Justice is the daughter of Publicity. Throughout the world deeds of villany are done every day in kid gloves: but, with us, at all events, they have to be done on the sly: here lies our true moral eminence as a nation. Utter then your 'fiat lux;' cast the full light of publicity on this dark villany; and behold it will wither, and your oppressed and injured fellow-citizen be safe from that very hour."

He signed it and read it out to them, or rather roared it. But he had written it so well he could not make it bad by delivery. Indeed, he was a masterly writer of English you must know. Julia was delighted; but Alfred shook his head. "The editor will not put it in."

"Th' editor! D'ye think I'm so green as to trust t' any one editor? D'ye think I have lived all these years and not learned what poor cowardly things men are? Moral courage! where can you find it? Except in the dickshinary? Few to the world their honest thoughts *avow;* the groveller, policy, robs justice *now*,

> **And none but Sampson dares to lift a hand**
> **Against the curst corruption of the land.**

Now, lad, I'm off to my printer with this. They are working night and day just now: there will be two hundred copies printed in half an hour."

"And me, doctor!" said Julia. "Am poor I to have no hand in it? How cruel of you! Oh pray, pray, pray let me help a little."

"Put on your bonnet, then, directly," said he: "in war never lose a minute."

"But I am so afraid they may be lying in wait for him outside."

"Then we'll give them a good hiding: there are three of us; all good men and staunch," said the indomitable doctor.

"No, no," said the pugnacious Alfred. "Julia does not like fighting: I heard her screaming all the time I was defending myself on the stairs: let us be prudent: let us throw dust in their eyes. Put me on a bonnet and cloak."

"And a nice little woman you'll make, ye fathom."

"Oh, I can stoop — to conquer."

Julia welcomed this plan almost with glee, and she and Edward very soon made a handsome brazen-looking trollop six feet high. Then it had to stoop, and Edward and Julia helped it out to the carriage, under the very noses of a policeman and a keeper, who were watching for Alfred: seeing which — oh frailty of woman! — the district visitor addressed it aloud as her aunt, and begged it to take care: which she afterwards observed was acting a falsehood, and "where was her Christianity?"

Alfred was actually not recognised: the carriage bowled away to the great printing-house; it was on that side the water. The foreman entered into the thing with spirit, and divided the copy, small as it was, among two or three compositors: so a rough proof was ready in an incredibly short time: the doctor corrected it; and soon they began to work off the copies. The foreman found them Mitchell's newspaper list, and envelopes by the hundred, and while the copies were pouring in, all hands were folding and addressing them to the London and provincial editors. The office

lent the stamps. The doctor drove Alfred to his own lodgings, and forbade him to reappear in Pembroke Street until the letter should come out in the London journals.

That night the letters were all posted, and at day-break were flying north, south, east, and west. In the afternoon the letter came out in four London evening papers, and the next morning the metropolis and the whole kingdom were ringing with them, and the full blaze of publicity burst upon this dark deed.

Ay, stout Sampson, well you knew mankind, and well you knew the nation you lived in. Richard Hardie, in the very act of setting detectives to find Alfred's lurking-place, ran his nose against this letter in the Globe. He collapsed at the sight of it; and wrote directly to Dr. Wolf enclosing it, and saying that it would be unadvisable to make any fresh attempt. His letter was crossed by one from Dr. Wolf, containing Sampson's thunderbolt extracted from the Sun, and saying that no earthly consideration should induce him to meddle with Alfred *now*. Richard Hardie flung himself into the train, and went down to his brother at Clare Court.

He was ill at ease. He felt like some great general, who has launched many attacks against the foe, very successful at first, then less successful, then repulsed with difficulty, then repulsed with ease, till at last the foe stands before him impregnable. Then he feels that ere long that iron enemy will attack him in turn, and that he, exhausted by his own onslaughts, must defend himself how he can. Yet there was a pause; he passed a whole quiet peaceful day with his brother, assuring him that the affair would go no further on either side;

but in his secret soul he felt this quiet day was but the ominous pause between two great battles; one of the father against the son, the other of the son against the father.

And he was right: the very next day the late defender attacked, and in earnest. But for certain reasons I prefer to let another relate it:

Hardie v. *Hardie.*

"Dear Sir, — If you had been in my office when I received your favour of yesterday relating deft.'s ruffian-like assault, you would have seen the most ridiculous sight in nature — videlicet, an attorney in a passion. I threw professional courtesy to the winds, and sent Colls off to Clare Court to serve the writ personally. Next day, he found the deft. walking in his garden with Mr. Richard Hardie. Having learned from the servant which was his man, he stepped up and served copy of the writ in the usual way. Deft. turned pale, and his knees knocked together, and Colls thinks he mistook himself for a felon, and was going to ask for mercy, but Mr. Richard stopped him, and said his attorneys were Messrs. Heathfield, in Chancery Lane; and was this the way Mr. Compton did business? serving a writ personally on a gentleman in weak health. So Colls, who can sneer in his quiet way, told him 'No,' but the invalid had declined to answer my letter, and the invalid had made a violent attack upon our client's person, avoiding his attorney, 'so, as his proceedings are summary, we meet him in kind,' says little Colls. 'Oho,' says Mr. Richard, 'you are a wit, are you? Come and have some luncheon.' This

was to get him away from the weaker brother, I take it. He gave Colls an excellent luncheon, and some admirable conversation on policy and finance: and, when he was going, says this agreeable host, 'Well, Mr. —, you have had your bellyful of chicken and Madeira; and your client shall have his bellyful of law.' And this Colls considers emphatic but coarse.

"I am, yours faithfully,

"JOHN COMPTON.

"P.S. Colls elicited that no further attempt will be made to capture you. It seems some injudicious friend of yours has been writing to the newspapers. Pray stop that."

On receiving this letter, Alfred bought another double pistol, loaded it, hired a body-guard of two prize-fighters, and with these at his heels, repaired to 66, Pembroke Street. No enemy was near: the press had swept the street alike of keepers and police with one Briarian gesture. He found Julia and Edward in great anxiety about their father. The immediate cause was a letter from Mrs. Dodd, which Edward gave him to read; but not till he had first congratulated him heartily on the ægis of the press being thrown over him. "The 'Tiser has a leader on it," said he.

Mrs. Dodd's letter ran thus:

"My dear dear Children, — I am coming home to you heartbroken, without your poor father. I saw an East Indian ship go to sea, and some instinct whispered, suppose he should be on board that ship! But,

foolishly, I did not utter my thoughts: because they call these instincts women's fancies. But now even Mr. Green thinks he is gone to sea, as the town has been ransacked, and no trace of him can we find. I met my cousin, Captain Bazalgette, here, and he is promoted to the Vulture frigate, and sails to-day. I have told him all our misfortunes, and he has promised to overhaul that merchant ship if he comes up with her: but I can see by the way his eye shuns mine he has no real hopes. His ship is the swifter, but he may pass her in the night. And then he is bound for New Zealand, not India. I told Reginald my poor husband's expression of face is altered by his affliction, and that he takes himself for a common sailor, and has his medal still round his neck. Our cousin is very kind, and will do all he can. God can protect my darling at sea, as he has ashore: and in his power alone have I any trust. Any further stay here is vain: my heart, too, yearns for my other treasures, and dreads lest whilst I am here, and because I am here, some evil should befal you too. Expect me soon after this letter, and let us try and comfort one another under this the heaviest of all our many troubles.

"With sad heart, I am,

"Both my darlings' loving mother and friend,

"Lucy Dodd."

In the discussion of this letter Alfred betrayed a slight defect of character. He pooh-poohed the calamity: said David had now a chance, and a good one, of being cured: whereas confinement was one of the common causes of insanity even in sane persons. And he stoutly maintained that David's going to sea was a

happy inspiration. Edward coloured, but deigned no reply. Julia was less patient, and though she was too loving and too womanly to tell Alfred to his face he was deceiving himself and arguing thus indirectly to justify himself in taking her father out of the asylum at all, yet she saw it, and it imparted a certain coldness into her replies. Alfred noticed this, and became less confident and louder, and prodigiously logical.

He was still flowing on with high imperious voice, which I suppose overpowered the sound of Mrs. Dodd's foot, when she entered suddenly, pale and weary, in her travelling-dress.

Alfred stopped, and they all started to their feet.

At sight of Alfred she stood dumbfoundered a single moment; then uttered a faint shriek; and looked at him with unutterable terror.

He stood disconcerted.

Julia ran, and throwing her arms round Mrs. Dodd's neck, entreated her not to be afraid of him: he was not mad; Dr. Sampson said so. Edward confirmed her words; and then Julia poured out the story of his wrongs with great gushes of natural eloquence that might have melted a rock, and, as anti-climax is part of a true woman, ended innocently by begging her mother not to look so unkindly at him; and his ankle so sprained, and him in such pain. For the first time in her life Mrs. Dodd was deaf to her daughter's natural eloquence; it was remarkable how little her countenance changed while Julia appealed; she stood looking askant with horror at Alfred all through that gentle eloquent appeal. But nevertheless her conduct showed she had heard every word: as soon as ever her daughter's voice stopped, she seemed to dilate bodily,

and moved towards Alfred pale and lowering. Yes, for once this gentle quiet lady looked terrible. She confronted Alfred. "Is this true, sir," said she, in a low stern voice. "Are you not insane? Have you *never* been bereft of your reason?"

"No, Mrs. Dodd, I have not."

"THEN WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY HUSBAND, SIR?"

CHAPTER X.

IT was a thunderbolt. Alfred hung his head, and said humbly, "I did but go up-stairs for one moment to wash my hands for dinner; and he was gone."

Mrs. Dodd went on in her low stern voice, almost as if he had not answered her at all: "By what right did you assume the charge of him? Did I authorize you to take him from the place where he was safe, and under my eye?"

Alfred replied sullenly: "He was not very safe, for he was almost burnt to death. The fire liberated him, not I. After the fire I ran away from him: he followed me; and then what could I do? I made the best of it; and gave up my own desires to try and cure him. He longed for the sea: I tried to indulge him: I hoped to bring him back to you sane: but fate was against me. I am the most unfortunate of men."

"Mr. Hardie," said Mrs. Dodd, "what you have done was the act of a madman: and, if I believed you to be anything *but* a madman, the sight of you would be intolerable to me; for you have made me a widow, and my children orphans."

With this she gave a great shudder, and retired in tears.

Alfred rose, pale and defiant. "That is *her* notion of justice," said he bitterly; "pray is it yours, you two?"

"Well, since you ask my opinion," said Edward, "I think it was very presumptuous of you to undertake the care of my father: and, having undertaken it, you ought not to have left him a moment out of your sight."

"Oh, that is your opinion, is it? And you, dear Julia?"

Julia made no reply, but hid her face in her hands and sighed deeply.

"I see," said Alfred sorrowfully. "Even you are against me at heart. You judge by the event, not the motive. There is no justice in this world for me. I'm sick of life. I have no right to keep the mistress of the house out of her own room: there, I'll go: my heart is broken. No it is not, and never shall be, by anything that breathes. Thank Heaven I have got one friend left in this bitter world: and I'll make her the judge whether I have deserved this last injustice. I'll go to my sister."

He jumped up and hobbled slowly across the room, while Julia and Edward sat chilled to the bone by those five little words, so simple, so natural, yet so incredible, and to the hearers so awful. They started, they shuddered, they sat petrified, staring at him, while he hobbled across the room to go to his sister.

As he opened the door to go out he heard stout Edward groan and Julia utter a low wail. But of course he had no idea what it meant. He hobbled

down a stair or two. But, ere he had gone far, there was a hasty whispering in the drawing-room, and Edward came after him in great agitation, and begged him to return; Julia must speak with him. He turned; and his face brightened. Edward saw that, and turned his own face away and stammered out, "Forget what I said to you. I am your friend, and always must be for *her* sake. No, no, I cannot come in there with you; I'll go and comfort mamma. Hardie, old fellow, we are very unhappy, all of us. We are too unhappy to quarrel."

These kind words soothed Alfred's sore heart. He brightened up and entered the drawing-room. He found Julia standing in the middle of it, the colour of ashes. Alfred was alarmed. "You are unwell, dearest," he cried; "you will faint. What have I done with my ungoverned temper?" He moved towards her with a face full of concern.

"No, Alfred," said she solemnly, "I am not ill. It is sorrow, deep sorrow for one I love better than all the world. Sit down beside me, my poor Alfred; and — God help me to speak to him!"

Alfred began to feel dire misgivings.

"Yes," said she, "I love you too well to let any hand but mine wound you." And here she took his sinewy hand with her soft palm. "I want to soften it in the telling: and ah, how can I? Oh, why can I not throw myself body and soul between you and all trouble, all sorrow?"

"My Julia,", said Alfred gravely, "something has happened to Jane."

"Yes, Alfred. She met with a terrible accident."

"Ah!"

"She was struck by an unfortunate man; he was not in his right mind."

"Struck? My sister struck. What, was there no man by?"

"No. Edward nearly killed him afterwards."

"God bless him."

"Alfred, be patient. It was too late."

"What, is she hurt seriously? Is she disfigured?"

"No, Alfred," said Julia, solemnly; "she is not disfigured: oh far from that."

"Julia, you alarm me. This comes of shutting her brother up. May Heaven's eternal curse light on those who did it. My poor little sister! How you weep, Julia. My heart is lead."

"I weep for you, darling, not for her."

"Ah, that is how they talk when those we love are — One word! I shall never see my poor little Jenny again; shall I?"

"Yes, Alfred: if you will but follow her steps and believe in Him, who soothed her last hour, and made her face shine with joy like an angel's while we all wept around; oh dear, oh dear, oh dear, he *said* he had but one true friend in the world. Alas! it is so; you have but me now, who pity you and love you more than heart can utter; my own, my beloved, my bereaved."

What could soften such a shock as this? It fell, and his anguish was frightful, all the more so that he ascribed the calamity to his imprisonment, and mingled curses and threats of vengeance with his bursts of grief. He spurned the consolations of religion: he said heaven was as unjust as earth, as cruel as hell.

She cried out and stopped his mouth with her hand: she almost forced him to kneel beside her, and prayed aloud for him: and when at last his agony found vent in tears, she put her innocent arms round his neck and wept with him.

Every now and then the poor fellow would almost shriek with remorse. "Oh, if I had only been kinder to her! if I had but been kinder to her!"

"You were kind to her," said Julia, softly but firmly.

"No, no; I was always sneering at her. And why? I knew her religion was sincere: but my little mind fixed on a few phrases she had picked up from others, and I—" He could say no more, but groaned with anguish. And let his remorse be a caution to us all. Bereaved we all must be, who live on and on: but *this*, bereavement's bitterest drop, we may avoid.

"Alfred," said Julia, "do not torment yourself. We girls care little about a few sarcasms; it is the cold heart that wounds us. You loved Jane, and she knew it well, and joyed in it. You were kinder to her than you think, and so her dying thoughts were for you. It was for you she asked, and made your father send for you, and poor I hoped you would come. And, dearest, her last act was to write a few words to you, and trust them to her who she knew loved you better than heart can utter. Since it was her wish, let us try and read them together, the last words of a saint (I have never seen them), and, if they do not prove words of love, then I will let you think you were not a good brother to her you and I, and poor, poor Edward, have lost."

He made a sad sign of assent; and Julia rose and got the enclosure. But, as Jane's last-written words reappeared on the scene in a somewhat remarkable way, I will only say here, that both these poor young things tried in vain to read them, and both in turn burst out sobbing, so that they could not: so they held the paper, and tried to see the words out of their streaming eyes. And these two mourners had the room to themselves till midnight; for even Mrs. Dodd's hostility respected Alfred then, and as for Julia, she was one of those who rise with the occasion: she was half wife, half angel from Heaven to her bereaved lover through all those bitter hours.

CHAPTER XI.

No life was ever yet a play: I mean an unbroken sequence of dramatic incidents. Calms will come; unfortunately for the readers, happily for the read. And I remember seeing it objected to novelists, by a young gentleman just putting his foot for the first time into "Criticism," that the writers aforesaid suppress the small intermediate matters which in real life come by the score between each brilliant event, and so present the ordinary and the extraordinary parts of life in false proportions. Now, if this remark had been offered by way of contrast between events themselves and all mortal attempts to reproduce them upon paper or the stage, it would have been philosophical; but it was a strange error to denounce the practice as distinctive of fiction: for it happens to be the one trait the novelist and dramatist have in common with the evangelist. *The gos*pels skip fifteen years of the most interesting

life Creation has witnessed, relating Christ's birth in full, and hurrying from his boyhood to the more stirring events of his thirtieth and subsequent years. And all the inspired histories do much the same thing. The truth is, that epics, dramas, novels, histories, chronicles, reports of trials at law, in a word, all narratives true or fictitious, except those which true or fictitious nobody reads, abridge the uninteresting facts as Nature never did, and dwell as Nature never did on the interesting ones.

Can, nothing, however, be done to restore, in the reader's judgment, that just balance of "the sensational" and "the soporific," which all writers, that have readers, disturb? Nothing, I think, without his own assistance. But surely something with it. And, therefore, I throw myself on the intelligence of my readers; and ask them to realize, that henceforth pages are no measure of time, and that to a year big with strange events, on which I have therefore dilated in this story, succeeded a year in which few brilliant things happened to the personages of this tale: in short, a year to be skimmed by chronicler or novelist, and yet (mind you) a year of three hundred and sixty-five days six hours, or thereabouts, and one in which the quiet, unobtrusive troubles of our friends' hearts, especially the female hearts, their doubts, divisions, distresses, did not remit, far from it. Now this year I propose to divide into topics, and go by logical, rather than natural, sequence of events.

The Lovers.

Alfred came every day to see Julia, and Mrs. Dodd invariably left the room at his knock.

At last Julia proposed to Alfred not to come to the house for the present; but to accompany her on her rounds as district visitor. To see and soothe the bitter calamities of the poor had done her own heart good in its worst distress, and she desired to apply the same medicine to her beloved, who needed it: that was one thing: and then another was, that she found her own anger rising when her mother left the room at that beloved knock: and to be angry with her poor widowed mother was a sin. "She is as unfortunate as I am happy," thought Julia; "I have got *mine* back."

Alfred assented to this arrangement with rather an ill grace. He misunderstood Julia, and thought she was sacrificing him to what he called her mother's injustice. This indeed was the interpretation any male would have been pretty sure to put on it. His soreness, however, did not go very far; because she was so kind and good to him when they were together. He used to escort her back to the door of 66: and look imploringly; but she never asked him in. He thought her hard for this. He did not see the tears that flowed for that mute look of his the moment the door was closed; tears she innocently restrained for fear the sight of them should make him as unhappy as his imploring look made her. Mauvais calcul! She should have cried right out. When we men are unhappy, we like our sweethearts to be unhappier; that consoles *us*.

But when this had gone on nearly a month, and no change, Alfred lost patience: so he lingered one day at the door to make a request. He asked Julia

to marry him; and so put an end to this state of things.

"Marry you, child?" cried Julia, blushing like a rose with surprise and pleasure. "Oh, for shame!"

After the first thrill, she appealed to his candour whether that would not be miserably selfish of her to leave her poor mother in her present distressed condition. "Ah, Alfred, *so* pale, *so* spiritless, and inconsolable! My poor, poor mother!"

"You will have to decide between us two one day."

"Heaven forbid!" said Julia, turning pale at the very idea. But he repeated doggedly that it must come to that, sooner or later. Then he reminded her of their solemn engagement, and put it to her whether it was a moral proceeding in her to go back from her plighted troth? What had he done to justify her in drawing back from her word? "I admit," said he, "that I have *suffered* plenty of wrong for your sake: but what have I done wrong?"

Undeterred by the fear of immorality, the monotonous girl had but one reply to his multiform reasons: "This is no time for me to abandon my mother."

"Ah, it is her you love: you don't care for me," snapped Alfred.

"Don't I, dear Alfred?" murmured Julia.

"Forgive me! I'm a ruffian, a wretch."

"You are my Alfred. But oh, have a little patience, dear."

"A little patience? I have the patience of Job. But even his went at last."

[I ought to have said they were in the passage now. The encroaching youth had gained an entrance by agitating her so at the door that she had to ask him

in to hide her own blushes from the public.] She now gently reminded him how much happier they were than they had been for months. "Dear me," said she, "I am almost happy: happier than I ought to be; could be quite so, but that I see you discontented."

"Ah, you have so many about you that you love: I have only you."

"And that is true, my poor Alfred."

This softened him a little; and then she interwove her fingers together, and so put both palms softly on his shoulder (you never saw a male do that, and never will), and implored him to be patient, to be generous. "Oh," said she, "if you knew the distress it gives me to refuse to you anything on earth, you would be generous, and not press me when my heart says 'Yes' but my lips *must* say 'No.'"

This melted him altogether, and he said he would not torment her any more.

But he went away discontented with himself for having yielded: my lord did not call it "yielding," but "being defeated." And as he was not only very deep in love, but by nature combative, he took a lodging nearly opposite No. 66, and made hot love to her, as hot as if the attachment was just forming. Her mother could not go out but he was at the door directly: she could not go out but he was at her heels. This pleased her at first and thrilled her with the sense of sweet and hot pursuit: but by-and-by, situated as she was between him and her mother, it worried her a little at times, and made her nervous. She spoke a little sharply to him now and then. And that was new. It came from the nerves not the heart. At last she advised him to

go back to Oxford. "I shall be the ruin of your mind if we go on like this," said she sadly.

"What, leave the field to my rivals? No, thank you."

"What rivals, sir?" asked Julia, drawing up.

"Your mother, your brother, your curates that would come buzzing the moment I left; your sick people, who bask on your smiles and your sweet voice till I envy them; Sarah, whom you permit to brush your lovely hair, the piano you play on, the air you deign to breathe and brighten, everybody and everything that is near you; they are all my rivals; and shall I resign you to them, and leave myself desolate? I'm not such a fool."

She smiled, and could not help feeling it was sweet to be pestered. So she said with matronly dignity, and the old Julian consistency, "You are a foolish, impetuous boy. You are the plague of my life: and — the sun of my existence." That passed off charmingly. But presently his evil genius prompted Alfred to endeavour to soften Mrs. Dodd by letter, and induce her to consent to his marriage with her daughter.

He received her answer at breakfast-time. It was wonderfully polite and cold; Mrs. Dodd feigned unmixed surprise at the proposal, and said that insanity being unfortunately in her own family, and the suspicion of insanity resting on himself, such a union was not to be thought of; and therefore, notwithstanding her respect for his many good qualities, she must decline with thanks the honour he offered her. She inserted a poisoned sting by way of postscript. "When you succeed in publicly removing the impression your own relations share with me, and when my husband owes

his restoration to you, instead of his destruction, of course you will receive a very different answer to your proposal — should you then think it consistent with your dignity to renew it."

As hostile testators used to leave the disinherited one shilling, not out of a shilling's worth of kindly feeling, but that he might not be able to say his name was omitted through inadvertency, so Mrs. Dodd inserted this postscript merely to clench the nail and tantalise her enemy. It was a masterpiece of feminine spite.

She would have been not a little surprised could she have seen how Alfred received her missive.

To be sure he sat in a cold stupor of dejection for a good half hour; but at the end of that time he was himself again, lifted up his head, and said quietly, "I'll get the trial over, and my sanity established, as soon as possible: and then I'll hire a yacht and hunt her husband till I find him."

Having settled this little plan he looked out for Julia, whose sympathy he felt in need of after such a stern blow.

She came out much later than usual that day, for, to tell the truth, her mother had detained her to show her Alfred's letter, and her answer.

"Ah mamma," said poor Julia, "you don't love me as you did once. Poor Alfred!"

Mrs. Dodd sighed at this reproach, but said she did not deserve it. No mother in her senses would consent to such a match.

Julia bowed her head submissively and went to her duties. But, when Alfred came to her open-mouthed to complain of her mother's cruelty, she stopped him at once, and asked him how he could go

and write that foolish, unreasonable letter. Why had he not consulted her first? "You have subjected yourself to a rebuff," said she angrily, "and one from which I should have saved you. Is it nothing that mamma out of pity to me connives at our meeting and spending hours together? Do you think she does no violence to her own wishes here? and is she to meet with no return?"

"What, are you against me too?" said poor Alfred.

"No, it is you who are our enemy with your unreasonable impatience."

"I am not so cold-blooded as you are, certainly."

"Humility and penitence would become you better than to retort on me; I love you both, and pray God on my knees to show me how to do my duty to both."

"That is it; you are not single-hearted like me. You want to please all the world, and reconcile the irreconcilable. It won't do: you will have to choose between your mother and me at last."

"Then of course I should choose my mother."

"Why?"

"Because she claims my duty as well as my love; because she is bowed down with sorrow, and needs her daughter just now more than you do; besides, you are my other self, and we must deny ourselves."

"We have no more right to be unjust to ourselves than to anybody else; injustice is injustice."

"Alfred, you are a high-minded Heathen, and talk Morality. Morality is a snare. What I pray to be is a Christian, as your dear sister was, and to deny myself; and you make it oh so difficult."

"So I suppose it will end in turning out your

heathen and then taking your curate. Your mother would consent to that directly."

"Alfred," said Julia with dignity, "these words are harsh, and — forgive me for saying so — they are coarse. Such words would separate us two, without my mother, if I were to hear many of them; for they take the bloom off affection, and that mutual reverence, without which no gentleman and lady could be blessed in holy wedlock."

Alfred was staggered and mortified too: they walked on in silence now.

"Alfred," said Julia at last, "do not think me behind you in affection, but wiser, for once, and our best friend. I do think we had better see less of one another for a time, my poor Alfred."

"And why for a time? why not for ever?"

"If your heart draws no distinction, why not indeed?"

"So be it then: for I will be no woman's slave. There's my hand, Julia: let us part friends."

"Thank you for that, dear Alfred: may you find some one who can love you more — than — I do."

The words choked her. But he was stronger, because he was in a passion. He reproached her bitterly. "If I had been as weak and inconstant as you are, I might have been out of Drayton House long before I did escape. But I was faithful to my one love. I have some right to sing Aileen Aroon, you have none. You are an angel of beauty and goodness; you will go to Heaven, and I shall go to the devil now for want of you; but then you have no constancy nor true fidelity: so that has parted us, and now nothing is left me but to try and hate you."

He turned furiously on his heel.

"God bless you, go where you will," faltered Julia.

He replied with a fierce ejaculation of despair, and dashed away.

Thus temper and misunderstanding triumphed, after so many strange and bitter trials had failed.

CHAPTER XII.

Both the parted lovers were wretched. Julia never complained, but drooped, and read the Psalms, and Edward detected her in tears over them. He questioned her and obtained a lame account; she being far more bent on screening Alfred than on telling the truth.

So he called on the other; and found him disconsolate, and reading a Heathen philosopher for comfort, and finding none. Edward questioned him, and he was reserved, and even sulky. Sir Imperturbable persisted quietly, and he exploded, and out came his wrongs. Edward said he was a pretty fellow: and wanted it all his own way. "Suppose my mother, with her present feelings, was to take a leaf out of your book, and use all her power; where would you be then? Come, old fellow, I know what love is, and one of us *shall* have the girl he loves, unless any harm should come to my poor father owing to your blunder — oh, that would put it out of the question, I feel — but let us hope better. I pulled you out of the fire, and somehow I seem to like you better than ever after that; let me pull you out of this mess, too."

"Pull away," cried the impetuous youth. "I'll

trust you with my life: ay, with more than my life, with my love: for you are the man for me: reason is always uppermost with you:

> Give me the man that is not passion's slave,
> And I will wear him in my heart's core, ay ——"

"Oh, bother that. If you are in earnest, don't mouth, but put on your hat and come over."

He assented; but in the middle of putting on his coat, made this little observation: "Now I see how wise the ancients were: yes, friendship is better than love; calmer, more constant, free from the heats and chills of that impetuous passion; its pure bosom is ruffled by none of love's jealousies and irritabilities. Solem e mundo tollunt qui tollunt amicitiam."

"Oh, bother quoting; come and shake hands with Julia." They went over; Mrs. Dodd was in the City. Edward ushered in Alfred, saying, "Here is the other Impetuosity;" and sagely retired for a few minutes: when he came back they were sitting hand in hand, he gazing on her, she inspecting the carpet. "That is all right," said Edward, drily: "now the next thing is, you must go back to Oxford directly, and read for your first class."

The proposal fell like a blight upon the reconciled lovers. But Edward gave potent reasons. The delays of law were endless: Alfred's defendant had already obtained one postponement of the trial on frivolous grounds. Now the Oxford examination and Doncaster races come on at a fixed date, by a Law of Nature, and admit of no "postponement swindle." "You mark my words, you will get your class before you will get your trial, and it won't hurt you to go into court a first-class man: will it? And then you won't quarrel

by letter, you two; I know. Come will you do what I tell you: or is friendship but a name? eh, Mr. Bombast?" He ended with great though quiet force: "Come, you two, which is better, to part like the scissors, or part like the thread?"

Similes are no arguments; and perhaps that is why they convince people so: Alfred capitulated to the scissors and thread; and only asked with abnormal humility to be allowed to taste the joys of reconciliation for two days: the third found him at Oxford; he called on the head of his college to explain what had prevented his return to Exeter in the October term twelve months ago, and asked for rooms. Instead of siding with a man of his own college so cruelly injured, the dignitary was alarmed by the bare accusation, and said he must consider: insanity was a terrible thing.

"So is false accusation, and so is false imprisonment," said Hardie bitterly.

"Unquestionably. But I have at present no means of deciding how far those words apply." In short, he could give no answer; must consult the other officers, and would convey the result by letter.

Alfred's pride was deeply mortified, not less by a certain cold repugnant manner than by the words. And there came over his heart a sickening feeling that he was now in the eyes of men an intellectual leper.

He went to another college directly, and applied to the vice-president; the vice-president sent him with a letter to the dean; the dean looked frightened, and told him hesitatingly the college was full; he might put his name down, and perhaps get in next year.

Alfred retired, and learned from the porter that the college was not full. He sighed deeply, and the sickening feeling grew on him; an ineradicable stigma seemed upon him, and Mrs. Dodd was no worse than the rest of the world then; every mother in England would approve her resolution. He wandered about the scenes of his intellectual triumphs: he stood in the great square of the schools, a place ugly to unprejudiced eyes, but withal somewhat grand and inspiring, especially to scholars who have fought their keen, though bloodless, battles there. He looked at the windows and gilt inscription of the Schola Metaphysices, in which he had met the scholars of his day and defeated them for the Ireland. He wandered into the theatre, and eyed the rostrum, whence he had not mumbled, but recited, his Latin prize poem with more than one thunder of academic applause: thunder compared with which Drury Lane's is a mere cracker. These places were unchanged; but he, sad scholar, wandered among them as if he was a ghost, and all these were stony phantoms of an intellectual past, never, never, to return.

He telegraphed Sampson and Edward to furnish him with certificates that he had never been insane, but the victim of a foul conspiracy; and, when he received them, he went with them to St. Margaret's Hall; for he had bethought him that the new principal was a first-rate man, and had openly vowed he would raise that "refuge for the oft-times ploughed" to a place of learning.

Hardie called, sent in his card, and was admitted to the principal's study. He was about to explain who he was, when the doctor interrupted him, and told

him politely he knew him by reputation. "Tell me rather," said he, shrewdly, "to what I owe this application from an undergraduate so distinguished as Mr. Hardie?"

Then Alfred began to quake, and, instead of replying, put a hand suddenly before his face, and lost courage for one moment.

"Come, Mr. Hardie," said the principal, "don't be disconcerted: a fault regretted is half atoned; and I am not disposed to be hard on the errors of youth; I mean where there is merit to balance them."

"Sir," said Alfred, sadly, "it is not a fault I have to acknowledge, but a misfortune."

"Tell me all about it," said Dr. Alder, guardedly.

He told it, omitting nothing essential that could touch the heart or excite the ironical humour of an academician.

"Well, 'truth is more wonderful than fiction,'" said the doctor. And I conclude the readers of this tale are all of the doctor's opinion; so sweet to the mind is cant.

Alfred offered his certificates.

Now Dr. Alder had been asking himself in what phrases he should decline this young genius, who was sane now, but of course had been mad, only had forgotten the circumstance. But the temptation to get an Ireland scholar into his Hall suddenly over-powered him. The probability that he might get a first-class in a lucid interval was too enticing; nothing venture nothing have. He determined to venture.

"Mr. Hardie," said he, "this house shall always be open to good morals and good scholarship while I preside over it, and it shall be open to them all the

more when they come to me dignified, and made sacred, by 'unmerited calamity.'"

Now this fine speech, like Minerva herself, came from the head: Alfred was overcome by it to tears. At that the doctor's heart was touched, and even began to fancy it had originated that noble speech.

It was no use doing things by halves; so Dr. Alder gave Alfred a delightful set of rooms; and made the Hall pleasant to him. He was rewarded by a growing conviction that he had made an excellent acquisition. This opinion, however, was anything but universal: and Alfred, finding the men of his own college suspected his sanity, and passed jokes behind his back, cut them all dead, and confined himself to his little Hall. There they petted him, and crowed about him, and betted on him for the schools as freely as if he was a colt the Hall was going to enter for the Derby.

He read hard, and judiciously, but without his old confidence: he became anxious and doubtful; he had seen so many first-rate men just miss a first class. The brilliant creature analysed all his Aristotelian treatises, and wrote the synopses clear with marginal references on great pasteboard cards three feet by two, and so kept the whole subject before his eye, till he obtained a singular mastery. Same system with the historians: nor did he disdain the use of coloured inks. Then the brilliant creature drew lists of all the hard words he encountered in his reading, especially in the common books, and read these lists till mastered. The stake was singularly heavy in his case, so he guarded every crevice.

And at this period he was not so unhappy as he expected. The laborious days went swiftly, and twice

a week at least came a letter from Julia. Oh how his grave academic room with oaken panels did brighten, when her letter lay on the table. It was opened, and seemed written with sunbeams. No quarrels on paper! Absence made the heart grow fonder. And Edward came to see him, and over their wine let out a feminine trait in Julia. "When Hurd calls she walks out of the room, just as my poor mother does when you come. That is spite: since you are sent away nobody else is to profit by it. Where is her Christianity, eh? and echo answers — Got a cigar, old fellow?" And, after puffing in silence awhile, he said resignedly, "I am an unnatural monster."

"Oh, are you?" said the other, serenely, for he was also under the benign influence.

"Yes," said Edward, "I am your ally, and a mere spy in the camp of those two ladies. I watch all their moves for your sake."

Alfred forgave him. And thus his whole life was changed, and for nearly twelve months (for Dr. Alder let him reside in the Hall through the vacation) he pursued the quiet tenor of a student's life, interrupted at times by law; but that is another topic.

Wife and no Wife.

Mrs. Dodd was visibly shaken by that calamity which made her shrink with horror from the sight of Alfred Hardie. In the winter she was so unwell that she gave up her duties with Messrs. Cross and Co. Her connexion with them had been creditable to both parties. I believe I forgot to say why they trusted

her so; well, I must tell it elsewhere. David off her hands, she was independent, and had lost the motive and the heart for severe work. She told the partners she could no longer do them justice, and left them to their regret. They then advised her to set up as a milliner, and offered her credit for goods at cash prices up to two thousand pounds: she thanked them like a sorrowful queen, and went her way.

In the spring she recovered some spirit and health: but at midsummer a great and subtle misfortune befel her. Her mind was bent on David night and day, and used to struggle to evade the laws of space that bind its grosser companion, and find her lost husband on the sea. She often dreamt of him, but vaguely. But one fatal night she had a dream as clear as daylight, and sharp as white pebbles in the sun. She was on a large ship with guns; she saw men bring a dead sailor up the side; she saw all their faces, and the dead man's too. It was David. His face was white. A clear voice said he was to be buried in the deep next morning. She saw the deck at her feet, the breeches of the guns, so clear, so defined, that, when she awoke, and found herself in the dark, she thought reality was the illusion. She told the dream to Julia and Edward. They tried to encourage her, in vain. "I saw him," she said, "I saw him; it was a vision, not a dream: my David is dead. Well, then, I shall not be long behind him."

Dr. Sampson ridiculed her dream to her face. But to her children he told another story. "I am anxious about her," he said, "most anxious. There is no mortal ill the distempered brain may not cause. Is it not devilish we can hear nothing of him? She will

fret herself into the grave, as sure as fate, if something does not turn up."

Her children could not console her: they tried, but something hung round their own hearts, and chilled every effort. In a word, they shared her fears. How came she to see him on board a ship with guns? In her waking hours she always said he was on a merchant ship. Was it not one of those visions, which come to mortals and give them sometimes a peep into Space, and, far more rarely, a glance into Time?

One day in the autumn, Alfred, being in town on law business, met what seemed the ghost of Mrs. Dodd in the streets. She saw him not; her eye was on that ghastly face she had seen in her dreams. It flashed through his mind that she would not live long to part him and Julia. But he discouraged the ungenerous thought; almost forgave her repugnance to himself, and felt it would be worse than useless to ask Julia to leave her mother, who was leaving her visibly.

But her horror of him was anything but softened: and she used to tell Dr. Sampson she thought the sight of that man would kill her now. Edward himself began to hope Alfred would turn his affections elsewhere. The house in Pembroke Street was truly the house of mourning now; all their calamities were light compared with this.

The District Visitor.

While Julia was writing letters to keep up Alfred's heart, she was very sad herself. Moreover he had left her for Oxford but a very few days, when she received an anonymous letter: her first. It was written in a female hand, and couched in friendly and

sympathetic terms. The writer thought it only fair to warn her that Mr. Alfred Hardie was passionately fond of a lady in the asylum, and had offered her marriage. If Miss Dodd wished to be deceived, let her burn this letter and think no more of it: if not, let her insert this advertisement in the Times: "The whole Truth. — L. D.," and her correspondent would communicate particulars by word or writing.

What a barbed and poisoned arrow is to the body, was this letter to Julia's mind. She sat cold as a stone with this poison in her hand. Then came an impetuous impulse to send it down to Alfred, and request him to transfer the other half of his heart to his lady of the asylum. Then she paused; and remembered how much unjust suspicion had been levelled at him already. What right had she to insult him? She would try and keep the letter to herself. As to acting upon it, her good sense speedily suggested it came from the rival in question, real or supposed. "She wants to make use of me," said Julia; "it is plain Alfred does not care much for her; or why does she come to me?" She put the letter in her desk, and it rankled in her heart. Hæret lateri lethalis arundo. She trembled at herself: she felt a savage passion had been touched in her. She prayed day and night against jealousy.

But I must now, to justify my heading, skip some months, and relate a remarkable incident that befel her in the said character. On the first of August in this year, a good Christian woman, one of her patients, asked her to call on Mr. Barkington, that lodged above. "He is a decent body, miss, and between you and me,

I think his complaint is, he don't get quite enough to eat."

"Barkington!" said Julia, and put her hand to her bosom. She went and tapped at his door.

"Come in," said a shrillish voice.

She entered, and found a weazened old man seated, mending his own coat.

He rose, and she told him she was a district visitor. He said he had heard of her; they called her the beautiful lady in that court. This was news to her, and made her blush. She asked leave to read a chapter to him; he listened as to some gentle memory of childhood. She prescribed him a glass of port wine, and dispensed it on the instant. Thus physicked, her patient became communicative, and chattered on about his native place — but did not name it — and talked about the people there. Now our district visitor was, if the truth must be told, a compounder. She would permit her pupils to talk about earthly affairs, on condition they would listen to heavenly ones before she went. So she let this old man run on, and he told her he had been a banker's clerk all his life, and saved a thousand pounds, and come up to London to make his fortune on the Stock Exchange; and there he was sometimes a bull, and sometimes a bear, and whichever he was, certain foxes called brokers and jobbers got the profit and he the loss. "It's all the same as a gambling table," said he. "The jobbers and brokers have got the same odds the bank has at Rouge et Noir, and the little capitalist like me is doomed beforehand." Then he told her that there was a crossing-sweeper near the Exchange who came from his native place, and had started as a speculator, and come down to

that, only he called it rising, and used to speak with a shudder of when he dabbled in the funds, and often told him to look sharp, and get a crossing. And lo! one day when he was cleaned out, and desperate, and hovering with the other ghosts of little capitalists about the tomb of their money, he saw his countryman fall flat, and the broom fly out of his hand. Instantly he made a rush, and so did a wooden-legged sailor; but he got first to the broom, and began to sweep while others picked up his countryman, who proved dead as a herring; and he succeeded to his broom, and it made money by the Exchange, though he never could: still, one day he picked up a pocket-book in that neighbourhood, with a lump of money, which he straightway advertised in — no newspapers. And now, Julia thought it time to interpose the eighth commandment, the golden rule, and such branches of learning.

He became a favourite of hers: he had so much to say: she even thought she had seen his face before: but she could not tell where. She gave him good books and tracts; and read to him, and ploughed his heart with her sweet voice, and sowed the good seed in the furrows — seed which, like wheat or other grain, often seems to fall flat and die, but comes out green after many days.

One Saturday she invited him to dine with the servants next day. He came during church time, and went away in the afternoon while she was with her mother. But she asked Sarah, who proved eager to talk about him. "He was a rum customer; kep asking questions all dinner-time. 'Well,' says I, 'you're good company, you are; be you a lawyer; for you examines

us; but you don't tell us nothing:' ye see, Miss, Jane she is that simple, she was telling him everything, and about Mr. Alfred's law-suit with his father and all."

Julia said that was indiscreet; but after all what did it matter?

"Who knows, Miss?" Sarah replied: "least said is soonest mended. If you please, Miss, who is he? Where does he bide? Where does he come from? Does he know Hardies?"

"I should think not. Why?"

"Because I'm much mistaken if he doesn't." Then putting on a stolid look, she asked, "Does he know your papa?"

"Oh no, Sarah. How should he?"

"There now," said Sarah: "Miss, you are all in the dark about this old man: I'll tell you something; I took him out of the way of Jane's temper when she began a dishing up, and I had him into the parlour a minute; and in course there he sees the picture of your poor papa hung up. Miss, if you'll believe me, the moment he claps eyes on that there picture, he halloes out, and out goes his two hands like this here. 'It's him!' says he; 'it's him!' and stares at the picture like a stuck pig. Forgot I was close behind him, I do believe. 'She's *his* daughter,' says he, in a whisper, a curious whisper; seemed to come out of his stomach. 'What's the matter now?' says I, just so. He gave a great start, as if my speaking had wakened him from a dream, and, says he, 'Nothing,' as quiet as a lamb. 'Nothing isn't much,' says I, just so. 'It usedn't to be anything at all when I was your age,' says he, sneerin. But I paid him in good coin; says I 'Old man, where you comes from do the folks use to start

and hallo out and cry "It's him! she's his daughter!" and fling their two arms abroad like a windmill in March, and all for — nothing?' So at that he changed as white as my smock, and fell all of a tremble. However, at dinner he perks up, and drew that poor simple Jane out a good one. But he didn't look towards me much, which I set opposite to watch my lord."

"Sarah," said Julia, "this is really curious, mysterious; you are a good, watchful, faithful girl; and, to tell the truth, I sometimes fancy I have seen Mr. Barkington's face; however, I will solve this little mystery to-morrow; for I will ask him: thank you, Sarah."

On Monday she called on Mr. Barkington to solve the mystery. But, instead of solving, her visit thickened it; for Mr. Barkington was gone bag and baggage. When Edward was told of this business, he thought it remarkable, and regretted he had not seen the old man.

So do I; for it is my belief Edward would have recognised him.

David Dodd.

The history of a man is the history of his mind. And that is why you have heard so little of late about the simplest, noblest and most unfortunate of all my personages. Insanity is as various as eccentricity; I have spared the kind-hearted reader some of David's vagaries; however, when we parted with him, he had settled into that strange phase of lunacy, in which the distant past seems nearly obliterated, and memory exists, but revolves in a narrow round of things present: this was accompanied with a positive illusion, to wit, a fixed idea that he was an able seaman: and, as usual,

what mental power he retained came out strongest in support of this idea. All this was marked by a bodily agility somewhat more than natural in a man of his age. Owing to the wind astern, he was enabled to run into Portsmouth before the steam-tug came up with him: and he did run into port, not because he feared pursuit, but because he was desperately hungry; and he had no suicidal tendencies whatever.

He made for a public-house, and called for some bread and cheese and beer; they were supplied, and then lo! he had no money to pay for them. "I'll owe you till I come back from sea, my bo," said he, coolly. On this the landlord collared him, and David shook him off into the road, much as a terrier throws a rat from him; then there was a row, and a naval officer, who was cruising about for hands, came up and heard it. There was nothing at all unseamanlike in David's conduct, and the gentleman took a favourable view of it, and paid the small demand; but not with unleavened motives; he was the second lieutenant of H. M. frigate Vulture; she had a bad name, thanks to her last captain, and was short of hands: he took David aside and asked him would he like to ship on board the Vulture.

David said yes, and suggested the foretop. "Oh yes," growled the lieutenant, "you all want to be there." He then gauged this Jacky Tar's intellects; asked him inter alia how to send a frigate's foretop gallant-yard down upon deck: and, to show how seamanship sticks in the brain when once it gets there, David actually told him. "You are rather old," said the lieutenant, "but you are a seaman:" and so took him on board the Vulture at Spithead, before Green began to search the town in earnest. Nobody acts his

part better than some demented persons do: and David made a very tolerable sailor, notwithstanding his forty-five years: and the sea did him good within certain limits. Between him and the past lay some intellectual or cerebral barrier as impenetrable as the great wall of China: but on the hither side of that wall his faculties improved. Of course the crew soon found out the gap in his poor brain, and called him Soft Billy, and played on him at first. But by degrees he won their affection; he was so wonderfully sweet-tempered: and besides, his mind being in an abnormal state, he loathed grog, and gave his allowance to his messmates. One day he showed an unexpected trait; they were lying becalmed in southern latitudes, and, time hanging heavy, each wiled it how he might; one fiddled, another wrote to his Polly, another fished for sharks, another whistled for a wind, scores fell into the form of meditation without the reality, and one got a piece of yarn and amused himself killing flies on the bulwark. Now this shocked poor Billy: he put out his long arm and intercepted a stroke. "What is the row?" said the operator.

"You musn't," said Billy, solemnly looking into his face with great dreamy eyes.

"You be ——," said the other, and lent him a tap on the cheek with the yarn. Billy did not seem to mind this; his skin had little sensibility, owing to his disorder.

Jack recommenced on his flies, and the bystanders laughed. They always laughed now at everything Billy said, as Society used to laugh when the late *Theo*dore Hook asked for the mustard at dinner; and

would have laughed if he had said, "You see me sad, I have just lost my poor father."

David stood looking on at the slaughter with a helpless puzzled air.

At last he seemed to have an idea, he caught Jack up by the throat and knee, lifted him with gigantic strength above his head, and was just going to hurl him shrieking into the sea, when a dozen strong hands interfered, and saved the man. Then they were going to bind Billy hand and foot; but he was discovered to be perfectly calm; so they remonstrated instead, and presently Billy's commander-in-chief, a ship-boy called Georgy White, shoved in and asked him in a shrill haughty voice how he dared do that. "My dear," said Billy, with great humility and placidity, "he was killing God's creatures, no allowance:* so, ye see, to save their lives, I was *obliged*."

At this piece of reasoning, and the simplicity and gentle conviction with which it was delivered, there was a roar. It subsided and a doubt arose whether Billy was altogether in the wrong.

"Well," said one, "I daresay life is sweet to them little creatures, if they could speak their minds."

"I've known a ship founder in a fair breeze all along of killing 'em," said one old salt.

Finally, several sided with Billy, and intimated that "it served the lubber right for not listening to *reason*." And, indeed, methinks it was lovely and touching that so divine a ray of goodness and superior

* Nautical phrase, meaning without stint or limit, or niggardly admeasurement; as there is of grog.

reason should have shot from his heart or from Heaven across that poor benighted brain.

But it must be owned his mode of showing his humanity was somewhat excessive and abnormal, and smacked of lunacy. After this, however, the affection of his messmates was not so contemptuous.

Now the captain of the Vulture was Billy's cousin by marriage, Reginald Bazalgette. Twenty years ago, when the captain was a boy, they were great friends: of late Bazalgette had seen less of him, still it seems strange he did not recognise him in his own ship. But one or two causes co-operated to prevent that. In the first place the mind when turned in one direction is not so sharp in another; and Captain Bazalgette had been told to look for David in a merchant ship bound for the East Indies. In the next place insanity alters the expression of the face wonderfully, and the captain of a frigate runs his eye over four hundred sailors at muster, or a hundred at work, not to examine their features, but their dress and bearing at the one, and their handiness at the other. The worst piece of luck was that Mrs. Dodd did not know David called himself William Thompson. So there stood "William Thompson" large as life on the ship's books, and nobody the wiser. Captain Bazalgette had a warm regard and affection for Mrs. Dodd, and did all he could. Indeed, he took great liberties: he stopped and overhauled several merchant ships for the truant; and, by-the-by, on one occasion William Thompson was one of the boat's crew that rowed a midshipman from the Vulture alongside a merchant ship to search for David Dodd: he heard the name and circumstance mentioned in the boat, but the very name was new to him. He remembered it,

but only from that hour; and told his loving tyrant, Georgie White, they had been overhauling a merchant ship and looking for one David Dodd.

It was about Midsummer the Vulture anchored off one of the South Sea islands, and sent a boat ashore for fruit. Billy and his dearly beloved little tyrant, Georgie White, were among the crew. Off goes Georgie to bathe, and Billy sits down on the beach with a loving eye upon him. The water was calm: but the boy with the heedlessness of youth stayed in it nearly an hour: he was seized with cramp and screamed to his comrades. They ran, but they were half a mile from the boat. Billy dashed into the water and came up with Georgie just as he was sinking for the last time; the boy gripped him; but by his great strength he disentangled himself and got Georgie on his shoulders, and swam for the shore. Meantime the sailors got into the boat, and rowed hastily towards them.

Now Billy was undermost and his head under water at times, and Georgie, some thought, had helped strangle him by gripping his neck with both arms. Anyway, by the boy's account, just as they were getting into shallow water, Billy gave a great shriek and turned over on his back; and Georgie paddled with his hands, but Billy soon after this sunk like a dead body while the boat was yet fifty yards off. And Georgie screamed and pointed to the place, and the boat came up and took Georgie in, and the water was so clear the sailors saw Billy lie motionless at the bottom, and hooked him with a boat-hook and drew him up: but his face came up alongside a deadly

white, with staring eyes, and they shuddered and feared it was too late.

They took him into a house and stripped him, and rubbed him, and wrapped him in blankets, and put him by the hot fire. But all would not do.

Then, having dried his clothes, they dressed the body again and laid him in the boat, and cast the Union Jack over him, and rowed slowly and unwillingly back to the ship, Georgie sobbing and screaming over the body, and not a dry eye in the boat.

The body was carried up the side, and uncovered, just as Mrs. Dodd saw in her dream. The surgeon was sent for and examined the body: and then the grim routine of a man-of-war dealt swiftly with the poor skipper. He was carried below to be prepared for a sailor's grave. Then the surgeon walked aft and reported formally to the officer of the watch the death by drowning of William Thompson. The officer of the watch went instantly to the captain in his cabin and reported the death. The captain gave the stereotyped order to bury him at noon next day; and the body was stripped that night and sewed up in his hammock with a portion of his clothes and bedding to conceal the outline of the corpse, and two cannon balls at his feet; and so the poor skipper was laid out for a watery grave, and covered by the Union Jack.

I don't know whether any of my young readers are much affected by the catastrophe I have just related. If not, I will just remind them that even Edward Dodd was prepared to oppose the marriage of Julia and Alfred, if any serious ill should befal his

father at sea, owing to Alfred's imprudent interference in rescuing him from Drayton House.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAW.

MINUTE study of my fellow-creatures has revealed to me that there are many intelligent persons who think that a suit at law commences in court. This is not so. Many suits are fought and decided by the special pleaders, and so never come into court; and, as a stiff encounter of this kind actually took place in Hardie v. Hardie, a word of prefatory explanation may be proper. Suitors come into court only to try an issue: an issue is a mutual lie direct: and towards this both parties are driven upon paper by the laws of pleading, which may be thus summed: 1. Every statement of the adversary must either be contradicted flat, or confessed and avoided: "avoided" means neutralised by fresh matter. 2. Nothing must be advanced by plaintiff which does not disclose a ground of action at law. 3. Nothing advanced by defendant, which, if true, would not be a defence to the action. These rules exclude in a vast degree the pitiable defects and vices that mark all the unprofessional arguments one ever hears; for on a breach of any one of the said rules the other party can demur: the demurrer is argued before the judges in Banco, and, if successfully, the faulty plaint or faulty plea is dismissed, and often of course the cause won or lost thereby, and the country saved the trouble, and the suitors the expense of trying an issue.

So the writ being served by Plt's attorney, and an appearance put in by Deft's, the paper battle began by Alfred Hardie, through his attorney, serving on Deft's attorney "THE DECLARATION." This was drawn by his junior counsel, Garrow, and ran thus, after specifying the count and the date:

Winchester to wit. Alfred Hardie by John Compton his attorney sues Thomas Hardie For that the Deft. assaulted Plt. gave him into custody to a certain person and caused him to be imprisoned for a long space of time in a certain place to wit a Lunatic Asylum whereby the Plt. was much inconvenienced and suffered much anguish and pain in mind and body and was unable to attend to his affairs and was injured in his credit and circumstances.

And the Plt. claims 5000*l.*

Mr. Compton conveyed a copy of this to Alfred, and said it was a beautiful declaration. "What," said Alfred, "is that all I have suffered at these miscreants' hands? Why, it is written with an icicle."

Mr. Compton explained that this was the outline; "Counsel will lay the colours on in court as thick as you like."

The defendant replied to the above declaration by three pleas.

By statute 8 & 9 Vic., c. 100, s. 105.

1. The Deft. by Joseph Heathfield his attorney says he is not guilty.

2. And for a further Plea the Deft. says that before and at the time of the alleged

imprisonment Plt. was a person of unsound mind and incompetent to take care of himself and a proper person to be taken care of and detained and it was unfit unsafe improper and dangerous that he should be at large thereupon the Deft. being the uncle of the Plt. and a proper person to cause the Plt. to be taken charge of under due care and treatment in that behalf did cause the Plt. to be so taken charge of and detained under due care and treatment, &c. &c.

The third plea was the stinger, but too long to cite *verbatim;* it went to this tune, that the plaintiff, at and before the time &c. had conducted himself like a person of unsound mind &c. and two certificates that he was insane had been given by two persons duly authorised under the statute to sign such certificates, and the defendant had believed and did bonâ fide believe these certificates to be true, &c. &c.

The first of these pleas was a mere formal plea, under the statute.

The second raised the very issue at common law the plaintiff wished to try.

The third made John Compton knit his brows with perplexity. "This is a very nasty plea," said he to Alfred: "a regular trap. If we join issue on it we must be defeated; for how can we deny the certificates were in form; and yet the plaguy thing is not loose enough to be demurred to. Colls, who drew these pleas for them?"

"Mr. Colvin, sir."

"Make a note to employ him in our next stiff pleading."

Alfred was staggered. He had thought to ride rough-shod over defendant: a common expectation of plaintiffs: but seldom realised. Lawyers fight hard. The pleas were taken to Garrow; he said there was but one course, to demur to No. 3. So the plaintiff "joined issue on all the defendant's pleas, and as to the last plea the plaintiff said the same was bad in substance." Defendant rejoined that the same was good in substance, and thus Hardie v. Hardie divided itself into two cases, a question of law for the judges, and an issue for the mixed tribunal loosely called a jury. And I need hardly say that should the plaintiff win one of them, and the defendant the other, the cause would be won by the defendant.

Postponing the history of the legal question, I shall show how Messrs. Heathfield fought off the issue, and cooled the ardent Alfred and sickened him of law.

In theory every Englishman has a right to be tried by his peers; but in fact there are five gentlemen in every court, each of whom has by precedent the power to refuse him a jury, by simply postponing the trial term after term, until the death of one of the parties, when the action, if a personal one, dies too: and, by a singular anomaly of judicial practice, if a slippery Deft. can't persuade A. or B., judges of the common law court, to connive at what I venture to call

THE POSTPONEMENT SWINDLE,

he can actually go to C. D. and E., one after another, with his rejected application, and the previous refusal *of the* other judges to delay and baffle justice goes for

little or nothing; so that the postponing swindler has five to one in his favour.

Messrs. Heathfield began this game unluckily. They applied to a judge in chambers for a month to plead. Mr. Compton opposed in person, and showed that this was absurd. The judge allowed them only four days to plead. Issue being joined, Mr. Compton pushed on for trial, and the cause was set down for the November term. Towards the end of the term Messrs. Heathfield applied to one of the puisné judges for a postponement, on the ground that a principal witness could not attend. Application was supported by the attorney's affidavit to the effect that Mr. Speers was in Boulogne, and had written to him to say that he had met with a railway accident, and feared he could not possibly come to England in less than a month. A respectable French doctor confirmed this by certificate. Compton opposed, but the judge would hardly hear him, and postponed the trial as a matter of course: this carried it over the sittings into next term. Alfred groaned, but bore it patiently; not so Dr. Sampson: he raged against secret tribunals: "See how men deteriorate the moment they get out of the full light of publeecity. What English judge, sitting in the light of Shorthand, would admit 'Jack swears that Gill says' for legal evidence. Speers has sworn to no facks. Heathfield has sworn to no facks but th' existence of Speers's hearsay. They are a couple o' lyres. I'll bet ye ten pounds t' a shilling Speers is as well as I'm."

Mr. Compton quietly reminded him there was a direct statement — the French doctor's certificate.

"A medical certificut!" shrieked Sampson, amazed.

— sirr, a medical certificut is just an [illegible] commerce — like an attorney's conscience. [illegible] a guinea and I'll get *you* sworn sick, diseased, [illegible] or dead this minute, whichever you like best.

[illegible] doctor, don't fly off: you said you'd bet [illegible] to a shilling Speers is not an invalid at all. [illegible]

"How will you find out?"

"How? Why set the thief-takers on um, to be sure."

He wrote off to the prefect of police at Boulogne, and in four days received an answer headed "Information in the interest of families." The prefect informed him there had been no railway accident: but that the Sieur Speers, English subject, had really hurt his leg getting out of a railway carriage six weeks ago, and had kept his room some days; but he had been cured some weeks, and going about his business, and made an excursion to Paris.

On this Compton offered Sampson the shilling. But he declined to take it. "The lie was self-evident," said he: "and here's a judge wouldn't see't, and an attorney couldn't. Been all their lives sifting evidence and. Oh the darkness of the professional mind!"

The next term came. Mr. Compton delivered the briefs and fees, subpœnaed the witnesses, &c., and Alfred came up with a good heart to get his stigma removed by twelve honest men in the light of day; but first one case was taken out of its order and put before him, then another, till term wore near an end. Then Messrs. Heathfield applied to another judge of

the court for a postponement. Mr. Richard Hardie, plaintiff's father, a most essential witness, was ill at Clare Court. Medical certificate and letter herewith.

Compton opposed. Now this judge was a keen and honourable lawyer, with a lofty hatred of all professional tricks. He heard the two attorneys, and delivered himself to this effect, only of course in better legal phrase: "I shall make no order. The defendant has been here before on a doubtful affidavit. You know, Mr. Heathfield, juries in these cases go by the plaintiff's evidence, and his conduct under cross-examination. And I think it would not be just nor humane to keep this plaintiff in suspense, and civiliter mortuum, any longer. You can take out a commission to examine Richard Hardie."

To this Mr. Compton nailed him, but the commission took time; and while it was pending, Mr. Heathfield went to another judge with another disabled witness; Peggy Black. That naïve personage was nursing her deceased sister's children — in an affidavit: and they had scarlatina — surgeon's certificate to that effect. Compton opposed, and pointed out the blot. "You don't want the children in the witness-box," said he: "and we are not to be robbed of our trial because one of your witnesses prefer nursing other people's children to facing the witness-box."

The judge nodded assent. "I make no order," said he.

Mr. Heathfield went out from his presence and sent a message by telegraph to Peggy Black. "You must have Scar. yourself, and telegraph the same at once: certificate by post."

The accommodating maiden telegraphed back that

she had unfortunately taken scarlatina of the children: medical certificate to follow by post. Four judges out of the five were now awake to the move. But Mr. Heathfield tinkered the hole in his late affidavit with Peggy's telegram, and slipped down to Westminster to the chief judge of the court, who had had no opportunity of watching the growth and dissemination of disease among Deft.'s witnesses. Compton fought this time by counsel and with a powerful affidavit. But luck was against him. The judge had risen to go home: he listened standing; Compton's counsel was feeble; did not feel the wrong: how could he? lawyers fatten by delays of justice, as physicians do by tardy cure. The postponement was granted.

Alfred cursed them all, and his own folly in believing that an alleged lunatic would be allowed fair play at Westminster or anywhere else. Compton took snuff, and Sampson appealed to the press again. He wrote a long letter exposing with fearless irony the postponement swindle as it had been worked in Hardie v. Hardie: and wound up with this fiery peroration:

"This Englishman sues not merely for damages, but to recover lost rights dearer far than money, of which he says he has been unjustly robbed; his right to walk in daylight on the soil of his native land without being seized, and tied up for life like a nigger or a dog; his footing in society; a chance to earn his bread; and a place among mankind: ay, among mankind; for a lunatic is an animal in the law's eye and society's, and an alleged lunatic is a lunatic till a jury clears him.

"I appeal to you, gentlemen, is not such a suitor sacred in all wise and good men's minds? Is he not

defendant as well as plaintiff? Why his stake is enormous compared with the nominal defendant's; and, if I know right from wrong, to postpone his trial a fourth time would be to insult Divine justice, and trifle with human misery, and shock the common sense of nations."

The doctor's pen neither clipped the words nor minced the matter you see. Reading this the water came into Alfred's eyes: "Ah, staunch friend," he said, "how few are like you! To the intellectual dwarfs who conspire with my oppressors, Hardie v. Hardie is but a family squabble. Parvis omnia parva." Mr. Compton read it too; and said from the bottom of his heart, "Heaven defend us from our friends! This is enough to make the courts decline to try the case at all."

And, indeed, it did not cure the evil: for next term another malade affidavitaire was set up. Speers to wit. This gentleman deposed to having come over on purpose to attend the trial; but, having inadvertently stepped aside as far as *Wales*, he lay there stricken with a mysterious malady, and had just strength to forward medical certificate. On this the judge, in spite of remonstrance, adjourned Hardie v. Hardie to the summer term. Summer came, the evil day drew nigh: Mr. Heathfield got the venue changed from Westminster to London, which was the fifth postponement. At last the cause came on: the parties and witnesses were all in court, with two whole days before them to try it in.

Dr. Sampson rushed in furious. "There is some deviltry afloat," said he. "I was in the House of

Commons last night, and there I saw the defendant's counsel earwigging the judge."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Compton, "such suspicions are ridiculous. Do you think they can talk of nothing but Hardie v. Hardie?"

"Mai — dearr sirr — my son met one of Heathfield's clerks at dinner, and he let out that the trile was not to come off. Put this and that together now."

"It will come off," said Mr. Compton, "and in five minutes at farthest."

In less than that time the learned judge came in, and before taking his seat made this extraordinary speech.

"I hear this cause will take three days to try; and we have only two days before us. It would be inconvenient to leave it unfinished; and I must proceed on circuit the day after to-morrow. It must be a remanet: no man can do more than time allows."

Plaintiff's counsel made a feeble remonstrance; then yielded. And the crier with sonorous voice called on the case of Bread v. Cheese, in which there were pounds at stake, but no principle. Oh, with what zest they all went into it; being small men escaping from a great thing to a small one. Never hopped frogs into a ditch with more alacrity. Alfred left the court and hid himself, and the scalding tears forced their way down his cheeks at this heartless proceeding: to let all the witnesses come into court at a vast expense to the parties: and raise the cup of justice to the lips of the oppressed, and then pretend he knew a trial would last more than two days, and so shirk it. "I'd have made that a reason for sitting till midnight," said poor Alfred, "not for prolonging a poor injured man's agony four

mortal months." He then prayed God earnestly for this great postponer's death as the only event that could give him back an Englishman's right of being tried by his peers, and so went down to Oxford broken-hearted.

As for Sampson he was most indignant, and said a public man had no business with a private ear: and wanted to appeal to the press again: but the doughty doctor had a gentle but powerful ruler at home, as fiery horses are best ruled by a gentle hand. Mrs. Sampson requested him to write no more, but look round for an M.P. to draw these repeated defeats of justice to the notice of the House. Now there was a Mr. Bite, who had taken a prominent and honourable part in lunacy questions; headed committees and so on: this seemed the man. Dr. Sampson sent him a letter saying there was a flagrant case of a sane man falsely imprisoned, who had now been near a year applying for a jury, and juggled out of this constitutional right by arbitrary and unreasonable postponements: would Mr. Bite give him (Dr. Sampson) ten minutes and no more, when he would explain the case and leave documentary evidence behind him for Mr. Bite to test his statement. The philanthropical M.P. replied promptly in these exact words:

"Mr. Bite presents his compliments to Dr. Sampson to state that it is impossible for him to go into his case, nor to give him the time he requests to do so."

Sampson was a little indignant at the man's insolence; but far more at having been duped by his public assumption of philanthropy. "The little pragmatical impostor!" he roared. "With what a sense o' relief th' animal flings off the mask of humanity when

there is no easy eclat to be gained by putting 't on." He sent the philanthropical Bite's revelation of his private self to Alfred, who returned it with this single remark: "Homunculi quanti sunt!"

Dishonest suitors all try to postpone; but they do not gain unmixed good thereby. These delays give time for more evidence to come in; and this slow coming and chance evidence is singularly adverse to the unjust suitor. Of this came a notable example in October next, and made Richard Hardie determine to precipitate the trial, and even regret he had not fought it out long ago.

He had just returned from consulting Messrs. Heathfield, and sat down to a nice little dinner in his apartments (Sackville Street), when a visitor was announced; and in came the slouching little figure of Mr. Barkington alias Noah Skinner.

Diamond cut Diamond.

Mr. Hardie suppressed a start, and said nothing. Skinner bowed low with a mixture of his old cringing way, and a certain sly triumphant leer, so that his body seemed to say one thing, and his face the opposite. Mr. Hardie eyed him and saw that his coat was rusty, and his hat napless: then Mr. Hardie smelt a beggar, and prepared to parry all attempts upon his purse.

"I hope I see my old master well," said Skinner, coaxingly.

"Pretty well in body, Skinner; thank you."

"I had a deal of trouble to find you, sir. But I *heard of* the great lawsuit between Mr. Alfred and

you, and I knew Mr. Heathfield was your solicitor; so I watched at his place day after day: and at last you came. Oh, I was so pleased when I saw your noble figure; but I wouldn't speak to you in the street for fear of disgracing you; I'm such a poor little guy to be addressing a gentleman like you."

Now this sounded well on the surface, but below there was a subtle something Mr. Hardie did not like at all: but he took the cue, and said, "My poor Skinner, do you think I would turn up my nose at a faithful old servant like you? have a glass of wine with me, and tell me how you have been getting on." He went behind a screen and opened a door, and soon returned with a decanter, leaving the door open: now in the next room sat, unbeknown to Skinner, a young woman with white eye-lashes, sewing buttons on Mr. Hardie's shirts. That astute gentleman gave her instructions, and important ones too, with a silent gesture; then reappeared and filled the bumper high to his faithful servant. They drank one another's healths with great cordiality, real or apparent. Mr. Hardie then asked Skinner carelessly, if he could do anything for him. Skinner said, "Well, sir, I am very poor."

"So am I, between you and me," said Mr. Hardie, confidentially; "I don't mind telling *you;* those confounded Commissioners of Lunacy wrote to Alfred's trustees, and I have been forced to replace a loan of five thousand pounds. That Board always sides with the insane. That crippled me, and drove me to the Exchange: and now what I had left is all invested in time-bargains. A month settles my fate: a little fortune, or absolute beggary."

"You'll be lucky, sir, you'll be lucky," said Skinner, cheerfully; "you have such a long head: not like poor little me. The Exchange soon burnt my wings. Not a shilling left of the thousand pounds sir, you were so good as to give me for my faithful services. But you will give me another chance, sir, I know; I'll take better care this time." Mr. Hardie shook his head sorrowfully, and said it was impossible. Skinner eyed him askant, and remarked quietly, and half aside, "Of course I *could* go to the other party: but I shouldn't like to do that. They would come down handsome."

"What other party?"

"La sir, what other party? why Mrs. Dodd's, or Mr. Alfred's; here's the trial coming on, you know, and of course if they could get me to go on the box, and tell all I know, or half what I know, why the judge and jury would say locking Mr. Alfred up for mad was a conspiracy."

Mr. Hardie quaked internally: but he hid it grandly, and once more was a Spartan gnawed beneath his robe by this little fox: "What," said he, sternly, "after all I and mine have done for you and yours, would you be so base as to go and sell yourself to my enemies?"

"Never sir," shouted Skinner, zealously: then in a whisper, "not if you'll make a bid for me."

"How much do you demand?"

"Only another thousand, sir."

"A thousand pounds!"

"Why, what is that to you, sir, you are rich *enough to* buy the eighth commandment out of the

tables of ten per cent.: and then the lawsuit, Hardies versus Hardies!"

"You have spoken plainly at last," said Mr. Hardie, grimly. "This is extorting money by threats. Do you know that nothing is more criminal, nor more easy to punish? I can take you before a magistrate, and imprison you on the instant for this attempt. I will, too."

"Try it," said Skinner, coolly. "Where's your witness?"

"Behind that screen."

Peggy came forward directly, with a pen in her hand. Skinner was manifestly startled and disconcerted. "I have taken all your words down, Mr. Skinner," said Peggy, softly: then to her master, "Shall I go for a policeman, sir?"

Mr. Hardie reflected. "Yes," said he, sternly: "there's no other course with such a lump of treachery and ingratitude as this."

Peggy whipped on her bonnet.

"What a hurry you are in," whined Skinner; "a policeman ought to be the last argument for old friends to run to." Then, fawning spitefully, "Don't talk of indicting me, sir," said he; "it makes me shiver: why how will you look when I up and tell them all how Captain Dodd was took with apoplexy in our office, and how you nailed fourteen thousand pounds off his senseless body, and forgot to put them down in your balance-sheet, so they are not white-washed off like the rest."

"Any witnesses to all this, Skinner?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who?"

"Well; your own conscience *for one*," said Skinner.

"He is mad, Peggy," said Mr. Hardie, shrugging his shoulders. He then looked Skinner full in the face, and said, "Nobody was ever seized with apoplexy in my office. Nobody ever gave me 14,000*l.* And if this is the probable tale with which you come here to break the law and extort money, leave my house this instant: and if ever you dare to utter this absurd and malicious slander, you shall lie within four stone walls, and learn what it is for a shabby vagabond to come without a witness to his back, and libel a man of property and honour."

Skinner let him run on in this loud triumphant strain till he had quite done; then put out a brown skinny finger, and poked him lightly in the ribs, and said quite quietly, and oh, so drily, with a knowing wink,

"I've — got — THE RECEIPT."

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. HARDIE collapsed as if he had been a man inflated, and that touch had punctured him. "Ah!" said he. "Ah!" said Skinner, in a mighty different tone: insolent triumph to wit.

After a pause, Mr. Hardie made an effort and said contemptuously; "The receipt (if any) was flung into the dusthole and carried away. Do you think I've forgotten that?"

"Don't you believe it, sir," was the reply. "While you turned your back and sacked the money, I said *to myself*, 'Oho, is that the game?' and nailed the

receipt. What a couple of scoundrels we were! I wouldn't have *her* know it for all your money. Come, sir, I see it's all right; you will shell out sooner than be posted."

Here Peggy interposed; "Mr. Skinner be more considerate; my master is really poor just now."

"That is no reason why I should be insulted and indicted and trampled under foot," snarled Skinner all in one breath.

"Show me the receipt and take my last shilling, you ungrateful vindictive viper," groaned Mr. Hardie.

"Stuff and nonsense," said Skinner. "I'm not a viper; I'm a man of business. Find me five hundred pounds; and I'll show you the receipt and keep dark. But I can't afford to *give* it you for that, of course."

Skinner triumphed, and made the great man apologize, writhing all the time, and wishing he was a day labourer with Peggy to wife, and fourteen honest shillings a week for his income. Having eaten humble pie, he agreed to meet Skinner next Wednesday at midnight, alone, under a certain lamp on the North Kensington Road: the interval (four days) he required to raise money upon his scrip. Skinner bowed himself out, fawning triumphantly. Mr. Hardie stood in the middle of the room motionless, scowling darkly. Peggy looked at him, and saw some dark and sinister resolve forming in his mind: she divined it, as such women can divine. She laid her hand on his arm, and said, softly, "Richard, it's not worth *that*." He started to find his soul read through his body, like a placard through a pane of glass. He trembled.

But it was only for a moment. "His blood be on his own head," he snarled. "This is not my seeking.

He shall learn what it is to drive Richard Hardie to despair."

"No, no," said Peggy; "there are other countries beside this: why not gather all you have, and cross the water? I'll follow you to the world's end, Richard."

"Mind your own business," said he, fiercely.

She made no reply, but went softly and sat down again, and sewed the buttons on his shirts. Mr. Hardie wrote to Messrs. Heathfield to get Hardie v. Hardie tried as soon as possible.

Meantime came a mental phenomenon: gliding down Sackville Street, victorious Skinner suddenly stopped, and clenched his hands; and his face writhed as if he had received a death-wound. In that instant Remorse had struck him like lightning; and, perhaps, whence comes the lightning. The sweet face and voice that had smiled on him, and cared for his body, and cared for his soul, came to his mind and knocked at his heart and conscience. He went home miserable with an inward conflict; and it lasted him all the four days: sometimes Remorse got the better, sometimes Avarice. He came to the interview still undecided what he should do. But, meantime, he had gone to a lawyer and made his will, leaving his little all to Julia Dodd: a bad sign this; looked like compounding with his awakened conscience.

It was a dark and gusty night. Very few people were about. Skinner waited a little while, and shivered, for his avarice had postponed the purchase of a great-coat until Christmas Day. At last, when the coast seemed clear, Mr. Hardie emerged from a side street. *Skinner put* his hand to his bosom.

They met. Mr. Hardie said quietly, "I must ask you, just for form, to show me you have the Receipt."

"Of course, sir; but not so near, please: no snatching, if I know it."

"You are wonderfully suspicious," said Mr. Hardie, trying to smile.

Skinner looked, and saw by the lamplight he was deadly pale. "Keep your distance a moment, sir," said he, and, on Mr. Hardie's complying, took the Receipt out, and held it up under the lamp.

Instantly Mr. Hardie drew a life-preserver, and sprang on him with a savage curse. And uttered a shriek of dismay; for he was met by the long shiny barrel of a horse-pistol, that Skinner drew from his bosom, and levelled full in the haggard face that came at him. Mr. Hardie recoiled, crying, "No! no! for Heaven's sake!"

"What!" cried Skinner, stepping forward and hissing, "do you think I'm such a fool as to meet a thief unarmed? Come, cash up, or I'll blow you to atoms."

"No, no, no!" said Mr. Hardie, piteously, retreating as Skinner marched on him with long extended pistol. "Skinner," he stammered, "th-this is n-not b-b-business."

"Cash up, then; that's business. Fling the five hundred pounds down, and walk away. Mind it is loaded with two bullets; I'll make a double entry on your great treacherous carcase."

"It's no use trying to deceive such a man as you," said Mr. Hardie, playing on his vanity. "I could not get the money before Saturday, and so I listened to the dictates of despair. Forgive me."

"Then come again Saturday night. Come alone,

and I shall bring a man to see I'm not murdered. And look here, sir, if you don't come to the hour and do the right thing without any more of these unbusiness-like tricks, by Heaven I'll smash you before noon on Monday."

"I'll come."

"I'll blow you to Mr. Alfred and Miss Dodd."

"I'll come, I tell you."

"I'll post you for a thief on every brick in the Exchange."

"Have mercy, Skinner. Have pity on the wretched man whose bread you have eaten. I tell you I'll come."

"Well mind you do, then, cash and all," said Skinner, sulkily, but not quite proof against the reminiscences those humble words awakened.

Each walked backwards a good dozen steps, and then they took different roads, Skinner taking good care not to be tracked home. He went up the high stairs to the hole in the roof he occupied, and lighted a rushlight. He had half a mind to kindle a fire, he felt so chilly; but he had blocked up the vent, partly to keep out the cold, partly to shun the temptation of burning fuel. However, he stopped the keyhole with paper, and also the sides of the window, till he had shut the wintry air all out. Still, what with the cold and what with the reaction after so great an excitement, his feeble body began to shiver desperately. He thought at last he would light a foot-warmer he had just purchased for old iron at a broker's; *that* would only spend a half-penny worth of charcoal. No he wouldn't; he would look at his money; that would cheer him. He unripped a certain part of his straw

mattress and took out a bag of gold. He spread three hundred sovereigns on the floor and put the candle down among them. They sparkled; they were all new ones, and he rubbed them with an old toothbrush and whiting every week. "That's better than any fire," he said, "they warm the heart. For one thing they are my own: at all events I did not steal them, nor take them of a thief for a bribe to keep dark and defraud honest folk." Then remorse gripped him: he asked himself what he was going to do. "To rob an angel," was the answer. "The fourteen thousand pounds is all hers, and I could give it her in a moment. Curse him, he would have killed me for it."

Then he pottered about and took out his will. "Ah," said he, "that is all right so far. But what is a paltry three hundred when I help do her out of fourteen thousand? Villain!" Then, to ease his conscience, he took a slip of paper and wrote on it a short account of the Receipt, and how he came by it, and lo: as if an unseen power had guided his hand, he added, "Miss Dodd lives at 66, Pembroke Street, and I am going to take it to her as soon as I am well of my cold." Whether this preceded an unconscious resolve which had worked on him secretly for some time, or whether it awakened such a resolve, I hardly know: but certain it is, that having written it, he now thought seriously of doing it; and, the more seriously he entertained the thought, the more good it seemed to do him. He got "The Sinner's Friend" and another good book she had lent him, and read a bit: then, finding his feet frozen, he lighted his chafer and blew it well, and put it under his feet and read. The good words began to reach his heart more and more: so did

the thought of Julia's goodness. The chafer warmed his feet and legs. "Ay," said he, "men don't want fires; warm the feet and the body warms itself." He took out "The Receipt" and held it in his hand, and eyed it greedily, and asked himself could he really part with it. He thought he could — to Julia. Still holding it tight in his left hand, he read on the good but solemn words that seemed to loosen his grasp upon that ill-gotten paper. "How good it was of her," he thought, "to come day after day and feed a poor little fellow like him, body and soul. She asked nothing back. She didn't know he could make her any return. "Bless her! bless her!" he screamed. "Oh, how cruel I have been to her, and she so kind to me. She would never let me want, if I took her fourteen thousand pounds. Like enough give me a thousand: and help me save my poor soul, that I shall damn if I meet him again. I won't go his way again. Lead us not into temptation. I repent. Lord have mercy on me a miserable sinner." And tears bedewed those wizened cheeks, tears of penitence, sincere, at least for the time.

A sleepy languor now came over him, and the good book fell from his hand: but his resolution remained unshaken; by-and-by waking up from a sort of heavy dose, he took, as it were, a last look at the receipt, and murmured, "My head, how heavy it feels." But presently he roused himself, full of his penitent resolution, and murmured again brokenly, "I'll — take it to — Pembroke Street to — morrow: to — mor — row."

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Hardie raised the money on his scrip, and at great inconvenience; for he was holding on five hundred thousand pounds' worth of old Turkish Bonds over an unfavourable settling day, and wanted every shilling to pay his broker. If they did not rise by next settling day, he was a beggar. However, being now a desperate gamester, and throwing for his last stake, he borrowed this sum, and took it with a heavy heart to his appointment with Skinner. Skinner never came. Mr. Hardie waited till one o'clock. Two o'clock. No Skinner. Mr. Hardie went home hugging his five hundred pounds, but very uneasy. Next day he consulted Peggy. She shook her head, and said it looked very ugly. Skinner had most likely got angrier and angrier with thinking on the assault. "You will never see him again till the day of the trial: and then he will go down and bear false witness against you. Why not leave the country?"

"How can I, simpleton? My money is all locked up in time-bargains. No, I'm tied to the stake; I'll fight to the last: and, if I'm defeated and disgraced, I'll die, and end it."

Peggy implored him not to talk so. "I've been down to the court," said she, softly, "to see what it is like. There's a great hall; and he must pass through that to get into the little places where they try 'em. Let me be in that hall with the five hundred pounds, and I promise you he shall never appear against you. We will both go; you with the money, I with my woman's tongue."

He gave her his hand like a shaky monarch, and said she had more wit than he had.

Mr. Heathfield, who had contrived to postpone Hardie v. Hardie six times in spite of Compton, could not hurry it on now with his co-operation. It hung fire from some cause or another a good fortnight: and in this fortnight Hardie senior endured the tortures of suspense. Skinner made no sign. At last, there stood upon the paper for next day, a short case of disputed contract, and Hardie v. Hardie.

The witnesses subpœnaed on either side in Hardie v. Hardie, began to arrive at ten o'clock, and a tall, stately man paraded Westminster Hall, to see if Skinner came with them; all other anxieties had merged in this: for the counsel had assured him if nothing unexpected turned up, Thomas Hardie would have a verdict, or if not, the damages would be nominal.

Now, this day, I must premise, was to settle the whole lawsuit: for, while trial of the issue was being postponed and postponed, the legal question had been argued and disposed of. The very Queen's counsel, unfavourable to the suit, was briefed with Garrow's views, and delivered them in court with more skill, clearness, and effect than Garrow ever could; then sat down, and whispered over rather contemptuously to Mr. Compton, "That is your argument, I think."

"And admirably put," whispered the attorney, in reply.

"Well; now hear Saunders knock it to pieces."

Instead of that, it was Serjeant Saunders that got maltreated: first one judge had a peck at him: then another: till they left him scarce a feather to fly with; and, when Alfred's counsel rose to reply, the

judges stopped him, and the chief of the court, Alfred's postponing enemy, delivered his judgment after this fashion:

"We are all of opinion that this plea is bad in law. By the common law of England no person can be imprisoned as a lunatic unless actually insane at the time. It has been held so for centuries, and down to the last case. And wisely: for it would be most dangerous to the liberty of the subject, if a man could be imprisoned without remedy unless he could prove mala fides in the breast of the party incarcerating him. As for the statute, it does not mend the matter, but rather the reverse; for it expressly protects duly authorised persons acting under the order and certificates, and this must be construed to except from the protection of the statute the person making the order."

The three puisné judges concurred and gave similar reasons. One of them said that if A. imprisoned B. for a *felon*, and B. sued him, it was no defence to say that B., in his opinion, had imitated felony. They cited Elliot v. Allen, Anderdon v. Burrows, and Lord Mansfield's judgment in a very old case, the name of which I have unfortunately forgotten.

Judgment was entered for the plaintiff; and the defendant's ingenious plea struck off the record; and Hardie v. Hardie became the leading case. But in law one party often wins the skirmish and the other the battle. The grand fight, as I have already said, was to be to-day.

But the high hopes and ardour with which the young lovers had once come into court were now

worn out by the postponement swindle, and the adverse events delay had brought on them. Alfred was not there: he was being examined in the schools; and had plumply refused to leave a tribunal that named its day and kept it — for Westminster, until his counsel should have actually opened the case. He did not believe trial by jury would ever be allowed him. Julia was there, but sad and comparatively listless. One of those strange vague reports, which often herald more circumstantial accounts had come home, whispering darkly that her father was dead, and buried on an island in the South Sea. She had kept this report from her mother, contrary to Edward's wish: but she implored him to restrain his fatal openness. In one thing both these sorely tried young people agreed, that there could be no marriage with Alfred now. But here again Julia entreated her brother not to be candid; not to tell Alfred this at present. "Oh do not go and dispirit him just now," she said, "or he will do something rash. No, he must and shall get his first class, and win his trial; and then you know any lady will be too proud to marry him; and, when he is married and happy, you can tell him I did all I could for him, and hunted up the witnesses, and was his loving friend, though I could not — be — his — wife."

She could not say this without crying; but she said it for all that, and meant it too.

Besides helping Mr. Compton to get up the evidence, this true and earnest friend and lover had attended the court day after day, to watch how things were done, and, woman-like, to see what *pleased* and what *displeased* the court. And so at last the court

crier cried, with a loud voice, "Hardie v. Hardie." Julia's eyes roved very anxiously for Alfred, and up rose Mr. Garrow, and stated to the court the substance of the declaration; "To this," he said, "three pleas have been pleaded: first, the plea of not guilty, which is a formal plea; also another plea, which has been demurred to, and struck off the record; and, lastly, that at the time of the alleged imprisonment the plaintiff was of unsound mind, and a fit person to be confined; which is the issue now to be tried."

Mr. Garrow then sat down, very tired of this preliminary work, and wondering when he should have the luck to conduct such a case as Hardie v. Hardie; and leaned forward to be ready to prompt his senior, a portly counsel, whom Mr. Compton had retained because he was great at addressing juries, and no point of law could now arise in the case.

Colt, Q.C., rose like a tower, knowing very little of the facts, and seeming to know eyerything. He had a prodigious business, and was rather indolent, and often skimmed his brief at home, and then mastered it in court — if he got time. Now, it is a good general's policy to open a plaintiff's case warily, and reserve your rhetoric for the reply; and Mr. Colt always took this line when his manifold engagements compelled him, as in Hardie v. Hardie, to teach his case first and learn it afterwards. I will only add, that in the course of his opening he was on the edge of seven distinct blunders; but Garrow watched him and always shot a whisper like a bullet just in time. Colt took it, and glided away from incipient error imperceptibly, and with a tact you can have no conception of. The jury did not detect the creaking of this machinery.

Serjeant Saunders did, and grinned satirically; so did poor Julia, and her cheeks burned and her eyes flashed indignant fire. And horror of horrors, Alfred did not appear.

Mr. Colt's opening may be thus condensed: The plaintiff was a young gentleman of great promise and distinction, on whom, as usual in these cases of false imprisonment, money was settled. He was a distinguished student at Eton and Oxford, and no doubt was ever expressed of his sanity till he proposed to marry, and take his money out of his trustees' hands by a marriage settlement. On this his father, who up to that time had managed his funds as principal trustee, showed him great personal hostility for some time, and looked out for a tool: that tool he soon found in his brother, the defendant, a person who, it would be proved, had actually not seen the plaintiff for a year and a half, yet, with great recklessness and inhumanity, had signed away his liberty and his happiness behind his back. Then tools of another kind — the kind that anybody can buy, a couple of doctors — were, as usual, easily found to sign the certificates. One of these doctors had never seen him but for five minutes, and signed in manifest collusion with the other. They decoyed this poor young gentleman away on his wedding morning — on his wedding morning, gentlemen, mark that — and consigned him to the worst of all dungeons. What he suffered there he must himself relate to you: for we, who have the happiness to walk abroad in the air of reason and liberty, are little able to realise the agony of mind endured by a sane man confined among the insane. What we *undertake* is to prove his sanity up to the very hour

of his incarceration; and also that he was quite sane at the time when a brutal attempt to recapture him by violence was made under the defendant's order, and defeated by his own remarkable intelligence and courage. Along with the facts the true reason why he was imprisoned will probably come out. But I am not bound to prove sinister motives. It is for the defendant to prove, if he can, that he had lawful motives for a lawless act; and that he exercised due precaution, and did not lend himself recklessly to the dark designs of others. If he succeed in this, that may go in mitigation of damages, though it cannot affect the verdict. *Our* principal object is the verdict, which will remove the foul aspersion cast on my injured client, and restore him to society. And to this verdict we are entitled, unless the other side can prove the plaintiff was insane. Call Alfred Hardie.

And with this he sat down.

An official called Alfred Hardie very loud; he made no reply. Julia rose from her seat with dismay painted on her countenance. Compton's, Garrow's, and Colt's heads clashed together.

Mr. Colt jumped up again, and said, "My Lud, I was not aware the gentleman they accuse of insanity is just being examined for high honours in the University of Oxford." Aside to Compton, "And if he doesn't come you may give them the verdict."

"Well," said the judge, "of course he will be here before you close your case."

On this the three heads clashed again, and Serjeant Saunders, for the defendant, popped up and said with great politeness, and affectation of sympathy, "My

Lud, I can quite understand my learned friend's hesitation to produce his principal witness."

"You understand nothing about the matter," said Colt cavalierly. "Call Mr. Harrington."

Mr. Harrington was Alfred's tutor at Eton, and deposed to his sanity there: he was not cross-examined. After him they went on step by step with a fresh witness for every six months, till they brought him close to the date of his incarceration: then they put in one of Julia's witnesses, Peterson, who swore Alfred had talked to him like a sane person that very morning; and repeated what had passed. Cross-examination only elicited that he and Alfred were no longer good friends, which rather strengthened the evidence. Then Giles and Hannah, now man and wife, were called, and swore he was sane all the time he was at Silverton House. Mr. Saunders diminished the effect by eliciting that they had left on bad terms with Mr. Baker, and that Alfred had given them money since. But this was half cured on re-examination, by being set down to gratitude on Alfred's part. And now the judge went to luncheon: and in came a telegraphic message to say Alfred was in the fast train coming up. This was good news and bad. They had hoped he would drop in before. They were approaching that period of the case, when not to call the plaintiff must produce a vile impression. The judge, out of good nature I suspect, was longer at luncheon than usual, and every minute was so much gained to Mr. Compton and Julia, who were in a miserable state of anxiety. Yet it was equalled by Richard Hardie's, who never entered the court, but paced the hall the livelong day to intercept Noah Skinner. And, when I tell you that Julia had

consulted Mr. Green, and that he had instantly pronounced Mr. Barkington to be a man from Barkington who knew the truth about the fourteen thousand pounds, and that the said Green and his myrmidons were hunting Mr. Barkington like beagles, you will see that R. Hardie's was no vain terror. At last the judge returned, and Mr. Colt was obliged to put in his reserves; so called Dr. Sampson. Instantly a very dull trial became an amusing one; the scorn with which he treated the opinion of Dr. Wycherley and Mr. Speers, and medical certificates in general, was so droll coming from a doctor and so racily expressed, that the court was convulsed. Also in cross-examination by Saunders he sparred away in such gallant style with that accomplished advocate that it was mighty refreshing. The judge put in a few intelligent questions after counsel had done, and surprised all the doctors in court with these words: "I am aware sir, that you were the main instrument in putting down blood-letting in this country."

What made Sampson's evidence particularly strong was that he had seen the plaintiff the evening before his imprisonment.

At this moment three men, all of them known to the reader, entered the court; one was our old acquaintance Fullalove, another was of course Vespasian: and the third was the missing plaintiff.

A buzz announced his arrival; and expectation rose high. Mr. Colt called him with admirably feigned nonchalance: he stepped into the box, and there was a murmur of surprise and admiration at his bright countenance and manly bearing.

Of course to give his evidence would be to write

"Hard Cash" over again. It is enough to say that his examination in chief lasted all that day, and an hour of the next.

Colt took him into the asylum, and made him say what he had suffered there to swell the damages. The main points his examination in chief established were his sanity during his whole life, the money settled on him, the means the doctors took to irritate him, and then sign him excited, the subserviency of his uncle to his father, the double motive his father had in getting him imprisoned; the business of the 14,000*l.*

When Colt sat down at eleven o'clock on the second day, the jury looked indignant, and the judge looked very grave, and the case very black.

Mr. Saunders electrified his attorney by saying, "My advice is, don't cross-examine him."

Heathfield implored him not to take so strange a course.

On this Saunders shrugged his shoulders, rose, and cross-examined Alfred about the vision of one Captain Dodd he had seen, and about his suspicions of his father. "Had not Richard Hardie always been a kind and liberal father?" To this he assented. "Had he not sacrified a large fortune to his creditors?" Plaintiff believed so. "On reflection, then, did not plaintiff think he must have been under an illusion?" No; he had gone by direct evidence.

Confining himself sagaciously to this one question, and exerting all his skill and pertinacity, Saunders succeeded in convincing the court that the Hard Cash was a myth: a pure chimera. The defendant's case looked up; for there are many intelligent madmen with a single illusion.

The re-examination was of course very short, but telling; for Alfred swore that Miss Julia Dodd had helped him to carry home the phantom of her father, and that Miss Dodd had a letter from her father to say that he was about to sail with the other phantom, the 14,000*l.*

Here Mr. Saunders interposed, and said that evidence was inadmissible. Let him call Miss Dodd.

Colt. — How do you know I'm not going to call her?

The Judge. — If your are, it is superfluous; if not, it is inadmissible.

Mr. Compton cast an inquiring glance up at a certain gallery. A beautiful girl bowed her head in reply, with a warm blush and such a flash of her eye, and Mr. Colt said, "As my learned friend is afraid to cross-examine the plaintiff on any point but this, and as I mean to respond to his challenge, and call Miss Dodd, I will not trouble the plaintiff any further.

Through the whole ordeal Alfred showed a certain flavour of Eton and Oxford that won all hearts. His replies were frank and honest, and under cross-examination he was no more to be irritated than if Saunders had been Harrow bowling at him, or the Robin sparring with him. The serjeant, who was a gentleman, indicated some little regret at the possible annoyance he was causing him. Alfred replied with a grand air of good fellowship, "Do not think so poorly of me as to suppose I feel aggrieved because you are an able advocate and do your duty to your client, sir."

The Judge. — That is very handsomely said. I am afraid you have got an awkward customer, in a case of this kind, Brother Saunders.

Serjt. S. — It is not for want of brains he is mad, my lord.

Alfred. — That is a comfort, any way. (Laughter.)

When counsel had done with him, the judge used his right, and put several shrewd and unusual questions to him: asked him to define insanity: he said he could only do it by examples: and he abridged several intelligent madmen, their words and ways; and contrasted them with the five or six sane people he had fallen in with in asylums; showing his lordship plainly that *he* could tell any insane person whatever from a sane one, and vice versâ. This was the most remarkable part of the trial, to see the shrewd old judge extracting from a real observer and logical thinker those positive indicia of sanity and insanity, which exist, but which no lawyer has ever yet been able to extract from any psychological physician in the witness-box. At last, he was relieved, and sat sucking an orange among the spectators; for they had parched his throat amongst them, I promise you.

Julia Dodd entered the box, and a sunbeam seemed to fill the court. She knew what to do: her left hand was gloved, but her white right hand bare. She kissed the book, and gave her evidence in her clear, mellow, melting voice; gave it reverently and modestly, for to her the court was a church. She said how long she had been acquainted with Alfred, and how his father was adverse, and her mother had thought it was because they did not pass for rich, and had told her they *were* rich, and with this she produced David's letter, and she also swore to having met Alfred and others carrying her father in a swoon from his father's very door. She deposed to Alfred's sanity on her

wedding eve, and on the day his recapture was attempted.

Saunders, against his own judgment, was instructed to cross-examine her; and, without meaning it, he put a question which gave her deep distress. "Are you now engaged to the plaintiff?" She looked timidly round, and saw Alfred, and hesitated. The serjeant pressed her politely, but firmly.

"Must I reply to that?" she said, piteously.

"If you please."

"Then, no. Another misfortune has now separated him and me for ever."

"What is that, pray?"

"My father is said to have died at sea: and my mother thinks *he* is to blame."

The Judge, to Saunders. — What on earth has this to do with Hardie against Hardie?

Saunders. — You are warmly interested in the plaintiff's success?

Julia. — Oh yes, sir.

Colt (aside to Garrow. — The fool is putting his foot into it: there's not a jury in England that would give a verdict to part two interesting young lovers.)

Saunders. — You are attached to him?

Julia. — Ah, that I do.

This burst, intended for poor Alfred, not the court, baffled cross-examination and grammar and everything else. Saunders was wise and generous, and said no more.

Colt cast a glance of triumph, and declined to re-examine. He always let well alone. The judge, however, evinced a desire to trace the fourteen thousand pounds from Calcutta; but Julia could not help him.

that mysterious sum had been announced by letter as about to sail, and then no more was heard about it till Alfred accused his father of having it. All endeavours to fill this hiatus failed. However Julia, observing that in courts material objects affect the mind most, had provided herself with all the pieces de conviction she could find, and she produced her father's empty pocket-book, and said, when he was brought home senseless, this was in his breast-pocket.

"Hand it up to me," said the judge. He examined it, and said it had been in the water.

"Captain Dodd was wrecked of the French coast," suggested Mr. Saunders.

"My learned friend had better go into the witness-box, if he means to give evidence," said Mr. Colt.

"You are very much afraid of a very little truth," retorted Saunders.

The judge stopped this sham rencontre, by asking the witness whether her father had been wrecked. She said "Yes."

"And that is how the money was lost," persisted Saunders.

"Possibly," said the judge.

"I'm darned if it was," said Joshua Fullalove, composedly.

Instantly, all heeds were turned in amazement at this audacious interruption to the soporific decorum of an English court. The transatlantic citizen received this battery of eyes with complete imperturbability.

"Si-lence!" roared the crier, awaking from a nap, with an instinct that something unusual had happened. *But the sh*rewd old judge had caught the sincerity with

with which the words were uttered; and put on his spectacles to examine the speaker.

"Are you for the plaintiff or the defendant?"

"I don't know either of 'em from Adam, my lord. But I know Captain Dodd's pocket-book by the bullet-hole."

"Indeed! You had better call this witness, Mr. Colt."

"Your lordship must excuse me; I am quite content with my evidence," said the wary advocate.

"Well, then, I shall call him as amicus curiæ; and the defendant's counsel can cross-examine him."

Fullalove went into the box, was sworn, identified the pocket-cook, and swore he had seen fourteen thousand pounds in it on two occasions. With very little prompting, he told the sea-fight, and the Indian darkie's attempt to steal the money, and pointed out Vespasian as the rival darkie who had baffled the attempt. Then he told the shipwreck to an audience now breathless — and imagine the astonished interest with which Julia and Edward listened to this stranger telling them the new strange story of their own father! — and lastly, the attempt of the two French wreckers and assassins, and how it had been baffled. And so the mythical cash was tracked to Boulogne.

The judge then put this question, "Did Captain Dodd tell you what he intended to do with it?"

Fullalove (reverently). — "I think, my lord, he said he was going to give it to his wife." (Sharply.) "Well, what is it, old hoss? What are you making mugs at me for? don't you know it's clean against law to telegraph a citizen in the witness-box?"

The Judge. — This won't do; this won't do.

The Crier. — Si-lence in the court.

"Do you hyar now what his lordship says?" said Fullalove, with ready tact. "If you know anything more, come up hyar and swear it like an enlightened citizen; do you think I'm going to swear for tew?" With this Vespasian and Fullalove proceeded to change places amidst roars of laughter at the cool off-hand way this pair arranged forensicalities; but Serjeant Saunders requested Fullalove to stay where he was. "Pray sir," said he, slowly, "who retained you for a witness in this cause?"

Fullalove looked puzzled.

"Of course somebody asked you to drop in here so very accidentally: come now, who was it?"

"I'm God Almighty's witness dropped from the clouds, I cal'late."

"Come sir, no prevarication. How came you here just at the nick of time?"

"Counsellor, when I'm treated polite, I'm ile; but rile me and I'm thunder stuffed with pison: don't you raise my dander, and I'll tell you. I have undertaken to educate this yar darkie" — here he stretched out a long arm, and laid his hand on Vespasian's woolly pate — "and I'm bound to raise him to the European model." (Laughter.) "So I said to him, coming to Westminster Bridge, Now there's a store hyar where they sell a very extraordinary Fixin; and it's called Justice: they sell it tarnation dear; *but* prime. So I make tracks for the very court where I got the prime article three years ago, against a warmint that was breaking the seventh and eighth commandments over me, adulterating my patent and then stealing it. Blast him!" (A roar of laughter.) "And coming along I said this old country's

got some good pints after all, old hoss. One is they'll sell you justice dear, *but* prime, in these yar courts, if you were born at Kamschatkee; and the other is, hyar darkies are free as air, disenthralled by the universal genius of British liberty; and then I pitched Counsellor Curran's bunkum into this darkie, and he sucked it in like mother's milk, and in we came on tiptoe, and the first thing we heard was a freeborn Briton treated wus than ever a nigger in Old Kentuck, decoyed away from his gal, shoved into a darned madhouse — the darbies clapped on him ——"

"We don't want your comments on the case, sir."

"No, nor any other free and enlightened citizen's, I reckon. Wal, Vespasian and me sat like mice in a snowdrift, and hid our feelings out of good manners, being strangers, till his lordship got e-tarnally fixed about the captain's pocket-book. Vesp., says I, this hurts my feelings powerful. Says I, this hyar lord did the right thing about my patent, he summed up just: and now he is in an everlasting fix himself; one good turn deserves another, I'll get him out of this fix, any way." Here the witness was interrupted with a roar of laughter that shook the court. Even the judge leaned back and chuckled, genially, though quietly. And right sorrowful was every Briton there when Saunders closed abruptly the cross-examination of Joshua Fullalove.

His lordship then said he wished to ask Vespasian a question.

Saunders lost patience. "What, another amicus curiæ, my lud! This is unprecedented."

"Excuse my curiosity, Brother Saunders," said the judge, ironically. "I wish to trace this 14,000*l.* as

far as possible. Have you any particular objection to the truth on this head of evidence?"

"No, my lud, I never urge objections when I can't enforce them."

"Then you are a wise man. (To Vespasian after he had been sworn.) Pray did Captain Dodd tell you what he intended to do with this money?"

"Is, massa judge, massa captan told dis child he got a branker in some place in de ole country, called Barkinton. And he said dis branker bery good branker, much sartainer not to break dan the brank of England. (A howl.) De captan said he take de money to dis yer branker, and then hab no more trouble wid it. Den it off my stomach, de captan say, and dis child heerd him. Yah!"

The plaintiff's case being apparently concluded, the judge went to luncheon.

In the buzz that followed, a note was handed to Mr. Compton: "*Skinner!* On a hot scent. Sure to find him to-day. — N.B. He is wanted by another party. There is something curious a-foot!"

Compton wrote on a slip, "For Heaven's sake bring him directly. In half an hour it will be too late."

Green hurried out and nearly ran against Mr. Richard Hardie, who was moodily pacing Westminster Hall at the climax of his own anxiety. To him all turned on Skinner. Five minutes passed, ten, fifteen, twenty: all the plaintiff's party had their eyes on the door; but Green did not return; and the judge did. Then to gain a few minutes more, Mr. Colt, instructed by Compton, rose and said with great solemnity, "We

are about to call our last witness; the living have testified to my client's sanity, and now we shall read you the testimony of the dead."

Saunders. — That I object to, of course.

Colt. — Does my learned friend mean to say he objects at random?

Saunters. — Nothing of the kind. I object on the law of evidence, a matter on which my learned friend seems to be under a hallucination as complete as his clients about that 14,000*l.*

> Colt. — There's none ever feared
> That the truth should be heard
> But they whom the truth would indict.

Saunders. — A court of justice is not the place for old songs and new law.

Colt. — Really, my learned friend is the objective case incarnate. (To Compton. — I can't keep this nonsense up for ever. Is Skinner come?) He has a Mania for objection, and with your lordship's permission I'll buy a couple of doctors and lock him up in an asylum as he leaves the court this afternoon. (Laughter.)

The Judge. — A very good plan: then you'll no longer feel the weight of his abilities. I conclude Mr. Colt you intend to call a witness who will swear to the deceased person's handwriting, and that it was written in the knowledge Death was at hand.

Colt. — Certainly, my lord. I can call Miss Julia Dodd.

Saunders. — That I need not take the trouble of objecting to.

The Judge (with some surprise). — No, Mr. Colt.

That will never do. You have examined her, and re-examined her.

I need hardly say Mr. Colt knew very well he could not call Julia Dodd. But he was fighting for seconds now, to get in Skinner. "Call Edward Dodd."

Edward was sworn, and asked if he knew the late Jane Hardie.

"I knew her well," said he.

"Is that her handwriting?"

"It is."

"Where was it written?"

"In my mother's house, at Barkington."

"Under what circumstances?"

"She was dying — of a blow given her by a maniac called Maxley."

"Maxley!" said the judge to counsel. "I remember the Queen v. Maxley. I tried him myself at the assizes: it was for striking a young lady with a bludgeon, of which she died. Maxley was powerfully defended; and it was proved that his wife had died, and he had been driven mad for a time, by her father's bank breaking. The jury *would* bring in a verdict that was no verdict at all; as I took the liberty to tell them at the time. The judges dismissed it, and Maxley was eventually discharged."

Colt. — "No doubt that was the case, my lord." To the witness. — "Did Jane Hardie know she was dying?"

"Oh, yes, sir. She told us all so."

"To whom did she give this letter?"

"To my sister."

"Oh, to your sister? To Miss Julia Dodd?"

"Yes, sir. But not for herself. It was to give to Alfred Hardie."

"Can you read the letter? it is rather faintly written. It is written in pencil, my lord."

"I *could* read it, sir; but I hope you will excuse me. She that wrote it was very, very dear to me."

The young man's full voice faltered as he uttered these words, and he turned his lion-like eyes soft and imploring on the judge. That venerable and shrewd old man, learned in human nature as well as in law, comprehended in a moment, and said, kindly, "You misunderstand him. Witnesses do not read letters *out* in court. Let the letter be handed up to me." This was fortunate, for the court cuckoo, who intones most letters, would have read all the sense and pathos out of this, with his monotonous sing-song.

The judge read it carefully to himself with his glasses, and told the jury it seemed a genuine document; then the crier cried "Silence in the court," and his lordship turned towards the jury and read the letter slowly and solemnly:

"DEAR, DEAR BROTHER, —

"YOUR POOR LITTLE JANE LIES DYING, SUDDENLY BUT NOT PAINFULLY, AND MY LAST EARTHLY THOUGHTS ARE FOR MY DARLING BROTHER. SOME WICKED PERSON HAS SAID YOU ARE INSANE. I DENY THIS WITH MY DYING BREATH AND MY DYING HAND. YOU CAME TO ME THE NIGHT BEFORE THE WEDDING THAT WAS TO BE, AND TALKED TO ME MOST CALMLY, RATIONALLY, AND KINDLY; SO THAT I COULD NOT RESIST YOUR REASONS, AND WENT TO YOUR WEDDING, WHICH, TILL THEN, I DID NOT INTEND. SHOW THESE WORDS TO YOUR SLAN-

DERERS WHEN I AM NO MORE. BUT OH! ALFRED, EVEN THIS IS OF LITTLE MOMENT COMPARED WITH THE WORLD TO COME. BY ALL OUR AFFECTION GRANT ME ONE REQUEST. BATTERED, WOUNDED, DYING IN MY PRIME, WHAT WOULD BE MY CONDITION BUT FOR THE SAVIOUR, WHOM I HAVE LOVED, AND WITH WHOM I HOPE SOON TO BE. HE SMOOTHS THE BED OF DEATH FOR ME, HE LIGHTS THE DARK VALLEY; I REJOICE TO DIE AND BE WITH HIM. OH, TURN TO HIM, DEAR BROTHER, WITHOUT ONE HOUR'S DELAY, AND THEN HOW SHORT WILL BE THIS PARTING. THIS IS YOUR DYING SISTER'S ONE REQUEST, WHO LOVES YOU DEARLY."

With the exception of Julia's sobs, not a sound was heard as the judge read it. Many eyes were wet: and the judge himself was visibly affected, and pressed his handkerchief a moment to his eyes. "These are the words of a Christian woman, gentlemen," he said: and there was silence. A girl's hand seemed to have risen from the grave to defend her brother and rend the veil from falsehood.

Mr. Colt, out of pure tact, subdued his voice to the key of the sentiment thus awakened, and said impressively, "Gentlemen of the jury, that is our case:" and so sat down.

CHAPTER XVI.

SERJEANT SAUNDERS thought it prudent to let the emotion subside before opening the defendant's case: so he disarranged his papers, and then rearranged them as before: and, during this, a person employed by Richard Hardie went out and told him this last untoward piece of evidence. He winced: but all was overbalanced by this, that Skinner's evidence was now inadmissible in the cause. He breathed more freely.

Serjeant Saunders rose with perfect dignity and confidence, and delivered a masterly address. In less than ten minutes the whole affair took another colour under that plausible tongue. The tactician began by declaring that the plaintiff was perfectly sane, and his convalescence was a matter of such joy to the defendant, that not even the cruel misinterpretation of facts and motives, to which his amiable client had been exposed, could rob him of that sacred delight. "Our case, gentlemen, is, that the plaintiff is sane, and that he owes his sanity to those prompt, wise, and benevolent measures, which *we* took eighteen months ago, at an unhappy crisis of his mind, to preserve his understanding and his property. Yes, his property, gentlemen; that property which, in a paroxysm of mania, he was going to throw away, as I shall show you by an unanswerable document. He comes here to slander us and mulct us out of five thousand pounds; but I shall show you he is already ten thousand pounds the richer for that act of ours, for which he debits us five thousand pounds, instead of crediting us twice the

sum. Gentlemen, I cannot, like my learned friend, call witnesses from the clouds, from the United States, and from the grave; for it has not occurred to my client, strong in the sense of his kindly and honourable intentions, to engage gentlemen from foreign parts, with woolly locks and nasal twangs, to drop in accidentally, and eke out the fatal gaps in evidence. The class of testimony we stand upon is less romantic: it does not seduce the imagination nor play upon the passions; but it is of a much higher character in sober men's eyes, especially in a court of law. I rely, not on witnesses dropped from the clouds, and the stars, and the stripes — to order; nor even on the prejudiced statements of friends and sweethearts, who always swear from the heart rather than from the head and the conscience; but on the calm testimony of indifferent men, and on written documents furnished by the plaintiff, and on contemporaneous entries in the books of the asylum, which entries formally describe the plaintiff's acts, and were put down at the time, — at the time, gentlemen — with no idea of a trial at law to come, but in compliance with the very proper provisions of a wise and salutary Act. I shall also lay before you the evidence of the medical witnesses who signed the certificates, men of probity and honour, and who have made these subtle maladies of the mind the special study of their whole life. I shall also call the family doctor, who has known the plaintiff and his ailments, bodily and mental, for many years, and communicated his suspicions to one of the first psychological physicians of the age, declining, with a modesty which we, who know less of insanity than he does, would do well to imitate — declining, I say, to pronounce a positive opinion

unfavourable to the plaintiff, till he should have compared notes with this learned man, and profited by his vast experience."

In this strain he continued for a good hour, until the defendant's case seemed to be a thing of granite. His oration ended, he called a string of witnesses: every one of whom bore the learned counsel out by his evidence in chief.

But here came the grand distinction between the defendant's case and the plaintiff's. Cross-examination had hardly shaken the plaintiff's witnesses: it literally dissolved the defendant's. Osmond was called, and proved Alfred's headaches and pallor, and his own suspicions. But then Colt forced him to admit that many young people had headaches without going mad, and were pale when thwarted in love, without going mad: and that as to the 14,000*l.* and the phantom, he *knew* nothing; but had taken all that for granted on Mr. Richard Hardie's word.

Dr. Wycherley deposed to Alfred's being insane and abnormally irritable, and under a pecuniary illusion, as stated in his certificate: and to his own vast experience. But the fire of cross-examination melted all his polysyllables into guess work and hearsay. It melted out of him that he, a stranger, had intruded on the young man's privacy, and had burst into a most delicate topic, his disagreement with his father, and so had himself created the very irritation he had set down to madness. He also had to admit that he knew nothing about the 14,000*l.* or the phantom, but had taken for granted the young man's own father, who consulted him, was not telling him a deliberate and wicked falsehood.

Colt. — In short, sir, you were retained to make the man out insane, just as my learned friend there is retained.

Wycherley. — I think, sir, it would not be consistent with the dignity of my profession to notice that comparison.

Colt. — I leave defendant's counsel to thank you for that. Come never mind *dignity;* let us have a little *truth.* Is it consistent with your dignity to tell us whether the keepers of private asylums pay you a commission for all the patients you consign to durance vile by your certificates?

Dr. Wycherley fenced with this question, but the remorseless Colt only kept him longer under torture, and dragged out of him that he received fifteen per cent. from the asylum keepers for every patient he wrote insane; and that he had an income of eight hundred pounds a year from that source alone. This, of course, was the very thing to prejudice a jury against the defence: and Colt's art was to keep to their level.

Speers, cross-examined, failed to conceal that he was a mere tool of Wycherley's, and had signed in manifest collusion, adhering to the letter of the statute, but violating its spirit: for certainly, the Act never intended by "separate examination," that two doctors should come into the passage, and walk into the room alternately, then reunite, and do the signing as agreed before they ever saw the patient. As to the illusion about the fourteen thousand pounds, Speers owned that the plaintiff had not uttered a word about the subject, but had peremptorily declined it. He had to confess, too, that he had taken for granted Dr.

Wycherley was correctly informed about the said illusion.

"In short," said the judge, interposing, "Dr. Wycherley took the very thing for granted which it was his duty to ascertain: and you, sir, not to be behind Dr. Wycherley, took the thing for granted at second hand." And when Speers had left the box, he said to Serjeant Saunders, "If this case is to be defended seriously, you had better call Mr. Richard Hardie without further delay."

"It is my wish, my lud; but I am sorry to say he is in the country very ill; and I have no hope of seeing him here before to-morrow."

"Oh, well; so that you *do* call him. I shall not lay hearsay before the jury: hearsay gathered from Mr. Richard Hardie — whom you will call in person if the reports he has circulated have any basis whatever in truth."

Mr. Saunders said coolly, "Mr. Richard Hardie is not the defendant," and flowed on; nor would any but a lawyer have suspected what a terrible stab the judge had given him so quietly.

The surgeon of Silverton House was then sworn, and produced the case book; and there stood the entries which had been so fatal to Alfred with the visiting justices. Suicide, homicide, self-starvation. But the plaintiff got to Mr. Colt with a piece of paper, on which he had written his view of all this, and cross-examination dissolved the suicide and homicide into a spirited attempt to escape and resist a false imprisonment. As for the self-starvation, Colt elicited that Alfred had eaten at six o'clock though not at two. "And pray, sir," said he, contemptuously, to the wit-

ness, "do you never stir out of a madhouse? Do you imagine that gentlemen in their senses dine at two o'clock in the nineteenth century?"

"No. I don't say that."

"What *do* you say, then? Is forcible imprisonment of a bridegroom in a madhouse the thing to give a *gentleman* a *factitious* appetite at *your* barbarous dinner-hour?"

In a word, Colt was rough with this witness, and nearly smashed him. Saunders fought gallantly on, and put in Lawyer Crawford with his draft of the insane deed, as he called it, by which the erotic monomaniac Alfred divested himself of all his money in favour of the Dodds. There was no dissolving this deed away; and Crawford swore he had entreated the plaintiff not to insist on his drawing so unheard-of a document; but opposition or question seemed to irritate his client, so that he had complied, and the deed was to have been signed on the wedding-day.

All the lawyers present thought this looked really mad. Fancy a man signing away his property to his wife's relatives!! The court, which had already sat long beyond the usual time, broke up, leaving the defendant with this advantage. Alfred Hardie and his friends made a little knot in the hall outside, and talked excitedly over the incidents of the trial. Mr. Compton introduced Fullalove and Vespasian. They all shook hands with them, and thanked them warmly for the timely and most unexpected aid. But Green and a myrmidon broke in upon their conversation. "I am down on Mr. Barkington, alias Noah Skinner. It isn't very far from here, if you will follow me." Green was as excited as a foxhound when Pug has begun to

trail his brush: the more so that another client of his wanted Noah Skinner; and so the detective was doing a double stroke of business. He led the way; it was dry, and they all went in pairs after him into the back slums of Westminster; and a pretty part that is.

Now as they went along Alfred hung behind with Julia, and asked her what on earth she meant by swearing that it was all over between her and him. "Why your last letter was full of love, dearest; what could you be thinking of to say that?"

She shook her head sadly, and revealed to him with many prayers for forgiveness that she had been playing a part of late: that she had concealed her father's death from him, and the fatal barrier interposed. "I was afraid you would be disheartened, and lose your first-class and perhaps your trial. But you are safe now, dear Alfred; I am sure the judge sees through them; for I have studied him for you. I know his face by heart, and all his looks and what they mean. My Alfred will be cleared of this wicked slander, and happy with some one — Ah!"

"Yes, I mean to be happy with some one," said Alfred. "*I* am not one of your self-sacrificing fools. You shall not sacrifice me to your mother's injustice nor to the caprices of fate. We love one another; but you would immolate me for the pleasure of immolating yourself. Don't provoke me, or I'll carry you off by force. I swear it, by Him who made us both."

"Dearest, how wildly you talk." She hung her head, and had a guilty thrill. She could not help thinking that eccentric little measure would relieve her of the sin of disobedience.

"I'll do it too," said he. "I'm not a man to be beat."

After uttering this doughty resolution he was quite silent, and they went sadly side by side; so dear, so near, yet always some infernal thing or other coming between them. They reached a passage in a miserable street. At the mouth stood two of Green's men, planted there to follow Skinner should he go out: but they reported all quiet. "Bring the old gentleman up," said Green. "I appointed him six o'clock, and it's on the stroke." He then descended the passage, and striking a light led the way up a high stair. Skinner lived on the fifth story. Green tapped at his door. "Mr. Barkington."

No reply.

"Mr. Barkington, I've brought you some money."

No reply.

"Perhaps he is not at home," said Mr. Compton.

"Oh, yes, sir, I sent a sharp boy up, and he picked the paper out of the keyhole and saw him sitting reading."

He then applied his own eye to the keyhole. "I see something black," said he, "I think he suspects."

While he hesitated, they became conscious of a pungent vapour stealing through the now open keyhole.

"Hallo!" said Green, "What is this?"

Fullalove observed coolly that Mr. Skinner's lungs must be peculiarly made if he could breathe in that atmosphere. "If you want to see him alive, let me open the door."

"There's something amiss here," said Green, gravely.

At that Fullalove whipped out a tool no bigger

than a nutcracker, forced the edge in, and sent the door flying open. The room or den was full of an acrid vapour, and close to them sat he they sought motionless.

"Keep the lady back," cried Green, and threw the vivid light of his bull's-eye on a strange, grotesque, and ghastly scene. The floor was covered with bright sovereigns that glittered in the lamp-light. On the table was an open book, and a candle quite burnt down: the grease had run into a circle.

And, as was that grease to the expired light, so was the thing that sat there in human form to the Noah Skinner they had come to seek. Dead this many a day of charcoal fumes, but preserved from decomposition by those very fumes, sat Noah Skinner, dried into bones and leather, waiting for them with his own Hard Cash, and with theirs; for, creeping awestruck round that mummified figure seated dead on his pool of sovereigns, they soon noticed in his left hand a paper: it was discoloured by the vapour, and part hid by the dead thumb; but thus much shone out clear and amazing, that it was a banker's receipt to David Dodd, Esq., for 14,010 *l.*, drawn at Barkington, and signed for Richard Hardie by Noah Skinner. Julia had drawn back, and was hiding her face; but soon curiosity struggled with awe in the others: they peeped at the Receipt; they touched the weird figure. Its yellow skin sounded like a drum, and its joints creaked like a puppet's. At last Compton suggested that Edward Dodd ought to secure that valuable document. "No no," said Edward: "it is too like robbing the dead."

"Then I will," said Compton.

But he found the dead thumb and finger would not part with the receipt; then, as a trifle turns the scale, he hesitated in turn: and all but Julia stood motionless round the body that held the Receipt, the soul of the lost Cash, and still, as in life, seemed loth to part with it.

Then Fullalove came beside the arm-chair, and said, "I'm a man from foreign parts; I have no interest here but justice: and justice I'll dew." He took the dead arm, and the joint creaked: he applied the same lever to the bone and parchment hand he had to the door: it creaked too, but more faintly, and opened and let out this.

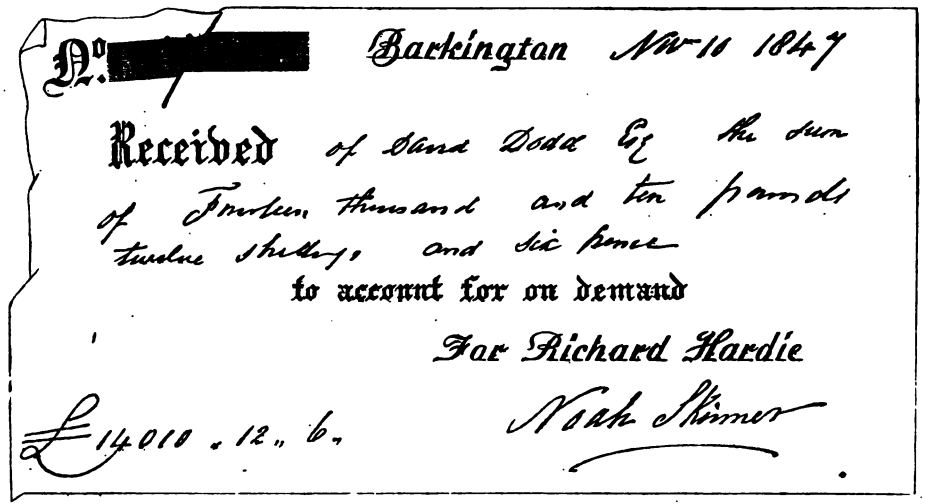
A stately foot came up the stair, but no one heard it. All were absorbed in the strange weird sight, and this great stroke of fate; or of Providence.

"This is yours, I reckon," said Fullalove, and handed the receipt to Edward. "No, no!" said Compton. "See: I've just found a will, bequeathing all he he has in the world, with his blessing, to Miss Julia Dodd. These sovereigns are yours, then. But above all, the paper: as your legal adviser, I insist on your taking it immediately. Possession is nine points. However, it is actually yours, in virtue of this bequest."

A solemn passionless voice seemed to fall on them from the clouds,

"No; IT IS MINE."

My story must now return on board the Vulture. Just before noon the bell the half hours are struck on



No. [redacted] Barkington Nov 10 1847

Received of Sand Dodd Esq the sum of Fourteen thousand and ten pounds twelve shillings and six pence to account for on demand

For Richard Hardie

Noah Skinner

£14010 . 12 . 6 .

To face p. 260. Vol. III.

was tolled to collect the ship's company; and soon the gangways and booms were crowded, and even the yards were manned with sailors, collected to see their shipmate committed to the deep. Next came the lieutenants and midshipmen and stood reverently on the deck: the body was brought and placed on a grating. Then all heads being uncovered below and aloft, the chaplain read the solemn service of the dead.

Many tears were shed by the rough sailors, the more so that to most of them, though not to the officers, it was now known that poor Billy had not always been before the mast, but had seen better days, and commanded vessels, and saved lives; and now he had lost his own.

The service is the same as ashore, with this exception: that the words "We commit his body to the ground, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, &c.," are altered at sea, thus: "We commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body, when the sea shall give up her dead, and the life of the world to come." At those words the body is allowed to glide off the grating into the sea. The chaplain's solemn voice drew near those very words, and the tears of pity fell faster; and Georgie White, an affectionate boy, sobbed violently, and shivered beforehand at the sullen plunge that he knew would soon come, and then he should see no more poor Billy who had given his life for his.

At this moment the captain came flying on deck, and jumping on to a gun, cried sharply, "Avast! Haul that body aboard."

The sharp voice of command cut across the solemn words and tones in the most startling way. The

chaplain closed his book with a look of amazement and indignation: the sailors stared, and for the first time did not obey an order. To be sure it was one they had never heard before. Then the captain got angry, and repeated his command louder; and the body was almost jerked in board.

"Carry him to my cabin; and uncover his face."

By this time nothing could surprise Jackey Tar. Four sailors executed the order promptly.

"Bosen, pipe to duty."

While the men were dispersing to their several stations, Captain Bazalgette apologised to the chaplain, and explained to him and to the officers. But I give his explanation in my own words. Finding the ship quiet, the purser went to the captain down below, and asked him coolly what entry he should make in the ship's books about this William Thompson, who was no more William Thompson than he was. "What do you mean?" said the captain. Then the purser told him that Thompson's messmates, in preparing him last night for interment, had found a little bag round his neck, and inside it a medal of the Humane Society, and a slip of paper written on in a lady's hand; then they had sent for him; and he had seen at once that this was a mysterious case: this lady spoke of him as her husband, and skipper of a merchant vessel.

"What is that?" roared the captain, who hitherto had listened with scarce half an ear.

"Skipper of a merchant vessel, sir, as sure as you command her Majesty's frigate Vulture: and then we found his shirt marked with the same name as the lady's."

"What was the lady's name?"

"Lucy Dodd; and David Dodd is on the shirt."

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" cried the captain.

"Didn't know it till last night."

"Why it is twelve o'clock. They are burying him.

"Yes, sir."

"Lucy would never forgive me," cried the captain. And to the purser's utter amazement he clapped on his cocked hat, and flew out of the cabin on the errand I have described.

He now descended to the cabin and looked: a glance was enough: there lay the kindly face that had been his friend man and boy.

He hid his own with his hands, and moaned. He cursed his own blindness and stupidity in not recognising that face among a thousand. In this he was unjust to himself. David had never looked *himself* till now.

He sent for the surgeon, and told him the whole sad story: and asked him what could be done. His poor cousin Lucy had more than once expressed her horror of interment at sea. "It is very hot," said he; "but surely you must know some way of keeping him till we land in New Zealand: curse these flies; how they bite!"

The surgeon's eyes sparkled; he happened to be an enthusiast in the art of embalming. "Keep him to New Zealand?" said he, contemptuously, "I'll embalm him so that he shall go to England looking just as he does now — by-the-by, I never saw a drowned man keep his colour so well before — ay, and two thousand years after that, if you don't mind the expense."

"The expense! I don't care if it cost me a year's pay. I think of nothing but repairing my blunder as far as I can."

The surgeon was delighted. Standing over his subject, who lay on the captain's table, he told that officer how he should proceed. "I have all the syringes," he said; "a capital collection. I shall inject the veins with care and patience; then I shall remove the brain and the viscera, and provided I'm not stinted in arsenic and spices —"

"I give you carte blanche on the purser: make your preparations, and send for him. Don't tell me how you do it; but do it. I must write and tell poor Lucy I have got him, and am bringing him home to her — dead."

The surgeon was gone about a quarter of an hour; he then returned with two men to remove the body, and found the captain still writing his letter, very sorrowful: but now and then slapping his face or leg with a hearty curse as the flies stung him.

The surgeon beckoned the men in softly, and pointed to the body, for them to carry it out.

Now, as he pointed, his eye, following his finger, fell on something that struck that experienced eye as incredible: he uttered an exclamation of astonishment so loud that the captain looked up directly from his letter; and saw him standing with his finger pointing at the corpse, and his eyes staring astonishment. "What now?" said the captain, and rose from his seat.

"Look! look! look!"

The captain came and looked, and said he saw nothing at all.

"The fly; the fly!" cried the surgeon.

"Yes, I see one of them has been biting him; for there's a little blood trickling. Poor fellow."

"A dead man can't bleed from the small veins in his skin," said the man of art. "He is alive, captain, he is alive, as sure as we stand here, and God's above. That little insect was wiser than us; he is alive."

"Jackson, don't trifle with me, or I'll hang you at the yard-arm. God bless you, Jackson. Is it really possible? Run some of you, get a mirror; I have heard that is a test."

"Mirror be hanged. Doctor Fly knows his business."

All was now flutter and bustle: and various attempts were made to resuscitate David, but all in vain. At last the surgeon had an idea. "This man was never drowned at all," said he: "I am sure of it. This is catalepsy. He may lie this way for a week. But dead he is not. I'll try the douche." David was then by his orders stripped and carried to a place where they could turn a watercock on him from a height: and the surgeon had soon the happiness of pointing out to the captain a slight blush on David's skin in parts, caused by the falling watter. All doubts ceased with this: the only fear was lest they should shake out the trembling life by rough usage. They laid him on his stomach, and with a bellows and pipe so acted on the lungs, that at last a genuine sigh issued from the patient's breast. Then they put him in a warm bed, and applied stimulants; and by slow degrees the eyelids began to wink, the eyes to look more mellow, the respiration to strengthen, the heart to beat: "Pa-

tience, now," said the surgeon, "patience, and lots of air."

Patience was rewarded. Just four hours after the first treatment, a voice, faint but calm and genial, issued from the bed on their astonished ears, "Good morning to you all."

They kept very quiet. In about five minutes more the voice broke out again, calm and sonorous.

"WHERE IS MY MONEY? MY FOURTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS."

These words set them all looking at one another; and very much puzzled the surgeon: they were delivered with such sobriety and conviction. "Captain," he whispered, "ask him if he knows you?"

"David," said the captain, kindly, "do you know me?"

David looked at him earnestly, and his old kindly smile broke out, "Know ye, ye dog," said he, "why you are my cousin Reginald. And how came you into this thundering Bank? I hope you have got no money here. Ware land sharks!"

"We are not in a Bank, David; we are on board my ship."

"The deuce we are. But where's my money?"

"Oh, we'll talk about that by-and-by."

The surgeon stepped forward and said soothingly "You have been very ill, sir. You have had a fit."

"I believe you are right," said David, thoughtfully.

"Will you allow me to examine your eye?"

"Certainly, doctor."

The surgeon examined David's eye with his thumb

and finger; and then looked into it to see how the pupil dilated and contracted.

He rubbed his hands after this examination; "More good news, captain!" then lowering his voice, "*Your friend is as sane as I am.*"

The surgeon was right. A shock had brought back the reason a shock had taken away. But how or why I know no more than the child unborn. The surgeon wrote a learned paper, and explained the whole most ingeniously. I don't believe one word of his explanation, and can't better it; so confine myself to the phenomena. Being now sane, the boundary wall of his memory was shifted. He remembered his whole life up to his demanding his cash back of Richard Hardie; and there his re-awakened mind stopped dead short. Being asked if he knew William Thompson, he said, "Yes, perfectly. The man was a foretopman on board the Agra, and rather a smart hand. The ship being aground, he drifted out to sea on a piano: but we cut the hawser and he got safe ashore." His recovered reason rejected with contempt as an idle dream all that had happened while that reason was in defect. The last phenomena I have to record were bodily; one was noted by Mr. Georgie White in these terms. "Billy's eyes used to be like a seal's: but, now he is a great gentleman, they are like yours and mine." The other was more singular: with his recovered reason came his first grey hair, and in one fortnight it was all as white as snow.

He remained a fortnight on board the Vulture, beloved by high and low. He walked the quarter-deck in the dress of a private gentleman, but looking like an admiral. The sailors touched their hats to

him with a strange mixture of veneration and jocoseness. They called him among themselves Commodore Billy. He was supplied with funds by Reginald, and put on board a merchant ship bound for England. He landed, and went straight to Barkington. There he heard his family were in London. He came back to London, and sought them; a friend told him of Green; he went to him, and of course Green saw directly who he was. But able men don't cut business short; he gravely accepted David's commission to find him Mrs. Dodd. Finding him so confident David asked him if he thought he could find Richard Hardie, or his clerk, Noah Skinner; both of whom had levanted from Barkington. Green, who was on a hot scent as to Skinner, demurely accepted both commissions; and appointed David to meet him at a certain place at six.

He came; he found Green's man, who took him up-stairs, and there was that excited group determining the ownership of the receipt.

Now to David that receipt was a thing of yesterday. "It is mine," said he. They all turned to look at this man, with sober passionless voice, and hair of snow. A keen cry from Julia's heart made every heart there quiver, and in a moment she was clinging and sobbing on her father's neck. Edward could only get his hand and press and kiss it. Instinct told them Heaven had given them their father back, mind and all.

Ere the joy and the emotion had calmed themselves, Alfred Hardie stepped out and ran like a deer to Pembroke Street.

Those who were so strangely reunited could not

part for a long time, even to go down the stairs one by one.

David was the first to recover his composure: indeed, great tranquillity of spirit had ever since his cure been a remarkable characteristic of this man's nature. His passing mania seemed to have burnt out all his impetuosity, leaving him singularly sober, calm, and self-governed.

Mr. Compton took the money and the will, and promised the executrix Skinner should be decently interred and all his debts paid out of the estate. He would look in at 66 by-and-by

And now a happy party wended their way towards Pembroke Street.

But Alfred was beforehand with them: he went boldly up the stairs, and actually surprised Mrs. Dodd and Sampson together.

At sight of him she rose, made him a low curtsey, and beat a retreat. He whipped to the door, and set his back against it. "No," said he, saucily.

She drew back astonished, and the colour mounted in her pale face. "What, sir, would you detain me by force?"

"And no mistake," said the audacious boy. "How else can I detain you? when you hate me so?" She began to peep into his sparkling eyes to see the reason of this strange conduct.

"C'way from the door ye vagabin," said Sampson.

"No, no my friend," said Mrs. Dodd, trembling, and still peering into his sparkling eyes. "Mr. Alfred Hardie is a gentleman at all events: he would not take this liberty with me, unless he had some excuse for it."

"You are wonderfully shrewd, mamma," said Alfred, admiringly. "The excuse is, I don't hate you as you hate me; and I am very happy."

"Why do you call me mamma to-day? Oh doctor, he calls me mamma."

"Th' audacious vagabin."

"No, no, I cannot think he would call me that unless he had some good news for us both?"

"What good news can he have, except that his trile is goin well, and you don't care for that."

"Oh, how can you say so? I care for all that concerns him: he would not come here to insult my misery with his happiness. He is noble, he is generous, with all his faults. How dare you call me mamma, sir! Call it me again, my dear child: because then I shall *know* you are come to save my heart from breaking." And with this, the truth must be told, the stately Mrs. Dodd did fawn upon Alfred with palms outstretched and piteous eyes, and certain cajoling arts of her sex.

"Give me a kiss then, mamma," said the impudent boy, "and I *will* tell you a little bit of good news."

She paid the required tribute with servile humility and readiness.

"Well then," said Alfred, and was just going to tell her all, but caught sight of Sampson making the most expressive pantomime to him to be cautious. "Well," said he, "I have seen a sailor."

"Ah!"

"And he is sure Mr. Dodd is alive."

Mrs. Dodd lifted her hands to Heaven but could not speak. "In fact," said Alfred, hesitating (for he was a wretched hand at a fib), "he saw him not a

fortnight ago, on board ship. But that is not all, mamma, the sailor says he has his reason."

Mrs. Dodd sank on her knees, and said no word to man, but many to the Giver of all good. When she arose she said to Alfred, "Bring this sailor to me. I must speak with him directly."

Alfred coloured. "I don't know where to find him just now."

"Oh, indeed," said Mrs. Dodd, quietly: and this excited her suspicion; and from that moment the cunning creature lay in wait for Master Alfred. She plied him with questions, and he got more and more puzzled how to sustain his story. At last, by way of bursting out of his own net, he said, "But I am sorry to say his hair has turned white. But perhaps you won't mind that."

"And he hadn't a grey hair."

"It is not grey, like the doctor's; it is white as the driven snow."

Mrs. Dodd sighed; then suddenly turning on Alfred, asked him, "Did the sailor tell you that?"

He hesitated a moment and was lost.

"You have seen him," she screamed; "he is in London: he is in the house. I feel him near me:" and she went into something very like hysterics. Alfred was alarmed, and whispered the truth. The doctor sent him off to meet them, and recommended caution; her nerves were in such a state a violent shock, even of happiness, might kill her.

Thus warned, Julia came into the room alone, and while Dr. Sampson was inculcating self-restraint for her own sake, she listened with a superior smile, and took quite a different line. "Mamma," said she, "he

is in the town: but I dare not bring him here till you are composed: his reason is restored; but his nerves are not so strong as they were; now, if you agitate yourself you will agitate him, and will do him a serious mischief."

This crafty speech produced an incredible effect on Mrs. Dodd. It calmed her directly: or rather her great love gave her strength to be calm. "I will not be such a wretch," she said. "See: I am composed, quite composed. Bring me my darling, and you shall see how good I will be: there now, Julia, see how calm I am, quite calm. What, have I borne so much misery, with Heaven's help, and do you think I cannot bear this great happiness, for my dear darling's sake?"

On this they proposed she should retire to her room, and they would go for David.

"Think over the meeting, dear, dear mamma," said Julia, "and then you will behave well for his sake, who was lost to us and is found."

Husband and wife met alone in Mrs. Dodd's room. No eye, even of the children, ventured to witness a scene so strange, so sacred. We may try and imagine that meeting; but few of us can conceive it by the light of our narrow experience. Yet one or two there may be; the world is so wide, and the adventures and emotions of our race so many.

One by one all were had up to that sacred room to talk to the happy pair. They found David seated calmly at his wife's feet, her soft hand laid on his white hair, lest he should leave her again: and they told him all the sorrow behind them; and he, genial and kindly as ever, told them all the happiness before

them. He spoke like the master of the house, the father of the family, the friend of them all.

But with all his goodness he was sternly resolved to have his 14,000*l.* out of Richard Hardie. He had an interview with Mr. Compton that very night, and the lawyer wrote a letter to Mr. Hardie, saying nothing about the death of Skinner, but notifying that his client, Captain Dodd, had recovered from Noah Skinner the receipt No. 17 for 14,010*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*, and he was instructed to sue for it unless repaid immediately. He added Captain Dodd was mercifully restored, and remembered distinctly every particular of the transaction.

They all thought in their innocence that Hardie v. Hardie was now at an end. Captain Dodd could prove Alfred's soi-disant illusion to be the simple truth. But Compton let them know that this evidence had come too late. "What, may we not get up and say here *is* papa, and it is all true?" cried Julia, indignant.

"No, Miss Dodd, certainly not, our case is closed."

"But suppose I insist on doing it?"

"Then you will be put out of court, Miss Dodd."

"Much I care, Mr. Compton."

He smiled, but convinced them.

Well then they would all go as spectators, and pray that justice might prevail.

They did go: and all sat together to hear a matter puzzled over, which had David come one day earlier he would have set at rest for ever.

Dick Absolom was put in to prove that Alfred had put two sovereigns on the stumps for him to bowl if he could; and after him the defendant, Mr. Thomas

Hardie, a mild, benevolent, weak, gentleman was put into the box, and swore the boy's father had come to him with story after story of the plaintiff's madness, and the trouble it would get him into: and so he had done for the best. His simplicity was manifest, and Saunders worked it ably. When Colt got hold of him, and badgered him, he showed something more than simplicity. He stuttered, he contradicted himself, he perspired, he all but wept.

Colt.—Are you sure you had no spite against him?

Deft. — No.

Colt. — You are not sure, eh?

This candid interpretation of his words knocked him stupid. He made no reply, but looked utterly flabbergasted.

Colt. — Did he not provoke you? Did he not call you an idiot?

Deft. — He might.

Colt. (satirically). — Of course he might. (Laughter.) But did he?

Deft. (plucking up a little spirit). — No. He called me SOFT TOMMY.

This revelation, and the singular appropriateness of the nickname, were so highly relished by an intelligent audience, that it was a long time before the trial could go on for roars. The plaintiff's ringing laugh was heard among the rest.

The cross-examination proceeded in this style till the defendant began to drivel at the mouth a little. At last, after a struggle, he said, with a piteous whine, that he could not help it: he hated signing his name; some mischief always came of it; but this time he had no option.

"No option?" said Colt. "What do you mean?"

And with one or two more turns of the screw, out came this astounding revelation:

"Richard said if I didn't put Taff in one, *he* would put *me* in one."

The Judge. — In one what?

Deft. (weeping bitterly). — In one madhouse, my lord.

In the peal that followed this announcement, Colt sat down grinning. Saunders rose smiling. "I am much obliged to the learned counsel for making my case," said he: "I need not prolong the sufferings of the innocent. You can go down, Mr. Hardie."

The Judge. — Have you any defence to this action?

"Certainly, my lord."

"Do you call Richard Hardie?"

"No, my lord."

"Then you had better confine yourself to the question of damages."

The sturdy Saunders would not take the hint: he replied upon the whole case, and fought hard for a verdict. The line he took was bold; he described Richard Hardie as a man who had acquired a complete power over his weaker brother: and had not only persuaded him by statements, but even compelled him by threats, to do what he believed would be the salvation of his nephew. "Will you imitate the learned counsel's cruelty? Will you strike a child?" In short, he made a powerful appeal to their pity, while pretending to address their judgments.

Then Colt rose like a tower, and assuming the verdict as certain, asked the jury for heavy damages.

He contrasted powerfully the defendant's paltry claim to pity with the anguish the plaintiff had undergone. He drew the wedding party, the insult to the bride, the despair of the kidnapped bridegroom; he lashed the whole gang of conspirators concerned in the crime, regretted that they could only make one of all these villains smart, but hinted that Richard and Thomas Hardie were in one boat, and that heavy damages inflicted on Thomas would find the darker culprit out. He rapped out Mr. Cowper's lines on liberty, and they were new to the jury, though probably not to you: he warned them that all our liberties depended on *them*. "In vain," said he, "have we beheaded one tyrant, and banished another, to secure those liberties, if men are to be allowed to send away their own flesh and blood into the worst of all prisons for life and not smart for it, in those lamentably few cases in which the law finds them out and lays hold of them." But it would task my abilities to the utmost, and occupy more time than is left me, to do anything like justice to the fluent fiery eloquence of Colt, Q.C., when he got a great chance like this. Tonat, fulgurat, et rapidis eloquentiæ fluctibus cuncta proruit et proturbat. Bursts of applause, that neither crier nor judge could suppress, bore witness to the deep indignation Britons feel when their hard-earned liberties are tampered with by power or fraud, in defiance of law; and, when he sat down, the jury were ready to fly out at him with 5000*l.* in hand.

Then rose the passionless voice of "justice according to law." I wish I could give the very words. The following is the effect as *I* understood it. Lawyers, *forgive* deficiencies!

"This is an important, but not a difficult case. The plaintiff sues the defendant under the law of England for falsely imprisoning him in a madhouse. The imprisonment is admitted, and the sufferings of the plaintiff not disputed. The question is, whether he was insane at the time of the act? Now, I must tell you, that in a case of this kind, it lies upon the defendant to prove the plaintiff's insanity, rather than on the plaintiff to prove his own sanity. Has the defendant overcome this difficulty? We have had from him hearsay and conjectures of respectable persons, but very little evidence. Illusion is the best proof of insanity: and a serious endeavour was certainly made to fasten an illusion on the plaintiff about a sum of 14,000*l.* But the proof was very weak, and went partly on an assumption that all error is hallucination: this is illusory, and would, if acted on, set one half the kingdom imprisoning the other half; and after all, they did not demonstrate that the plaintiff was *in error*. They advanced no undeniable proof that Mr. Richard Hardie has not embezzled this 14,000*l.* I don't say it was proved on the other hand that he did embezzle that sum. Richard Hardie suing Alfred Hardie for libel on this evidence might possibly obtain a verdict: for then the burden of proof would lie on Alfred Hardie: but here it lies on those who say he is insane. The fact appears to be that the plaintiff imbibed a reasonable suspicion of his own father's integrity; it was a suspicion founded on evidence, imperfect, indeed, but of a sound character as far as it went. There was a letter from Captain Dodd to his family, announcing his return with 14,000*l.* upon him, and, while as yet unaware of this letter, the plaintiff heard David Dodd

accuse Richard Hardie of possessing improperly 14,000*l.*, the identical sum. At least, he swears to this, and as Richard Hardie was not called to contradict him, you are at liberty to suppose that Richard Hardie could not contradict him on oath. Here, then, true or false, was a rational suspicion; and every man has a right to a rational suspicion of his neighbour, and even to utter it within due limits: and, if he overstep those, the party slandered has his legal remedy; and, if he omits his legal remedy, and makes an attempt of doubtful legality not to confute but to stifle the voice of reasonable suspicion, shrewd men will suspect all the more. But then comes a distinct and respectable kind of evidence for the defendant; he urges that the plaintiff was going to sign away his property to his wife's relations. Now, this was proved, and a draft of the deed put in and sworn to. This taken singly has a very extraordinary look: still, you must consider the plaintiff's reasonable suspicion that money belonging to the Dodds had passed irregularly to the Hardies, and then the wonder is much diminished. Young and noble minds have in every age done these generous, self-denying, and delicate acts. The older we get, the less likely we are to be incarcerated for a crime of this character; but we are not to imprison youth and chivalry because we have outgrown them. To go from particulars to generals, the defendant, on whom the proof lies, has advanced hearsay and conjecture, and not put their originators into the box. And the plaintiff, on whom the proof does not lie, has advanced an overpowering amount of evidence that he was sane at the time of his incarceration: this was proved to demonstration by friends, strangers, and by himself." Here the judge

analysed the testimony of several of the plaintiff's witnesses.

"As to the parties themselves, it is curious how they impersonated, so to speak, their respective lines of argument. The representative of evidence and sound reasoning, though accused of insanity, was clear, precise, frank, rational, and dignified in the witness-box. The party, who relied on hearsay and conjecture, was as feeble as they are; he was almost imbecile, as you observed; and, looking at both parties, it seems monstrous that the plaintiff should be the one confined as a lunatic, and the defendant allowed to run wild and lock up his intellectual superiors. If he means to lock them *all* up, who is safe? (Laughter.) The only serious question, I apprehend, is on what basis the damages ought to be assessed. The plaintiff's counsel has made a powerful appeal to your passions, and calls for vengeance. Now I must tell you you have no right to make yourselves ministers of vengeance, nor even to punish the defendant in a suit of the kind: still less ought you to strike the defendant harder than you otherwise would — in the vague hope of hitting indirectly the true mover of the defendant and the other puppets. Let me solemnly warn you against that unfortunate suggestion of the learned counsel's. If the plaintiff wants vengeance, the criminal law offers it. After benefiting by your verdict, he can still indict the guilty party or parties. Meanwhile he comes *here*, not for vengeance, but for compensation, and restoration to that society which he is every way fitted to adorn. More than this — and all our sympathies — it is not for us to give him. But then the defendant's Counsel went too far the other way; his client, he says, is next

door to an idiot, and so, forsooth, his purse must be spared entirely. This is all very well if it could be done without ignoring the plaintiff, and his just claim to compensation. If the defendant instead of being weak-minded were an idiot, or a lunatic, it would protect him from punishment as a felon, but not from damages in a suit. A sane man is not to be falsely imprisoned by a lunatic without full compensation from the lunatic or his estate; à fortiori, he is not to be so imprisoned by a mere fool without just compensation. Supposing your verdict then to be for the plaintiff, I think vindictive damages would be unfair on this feeble defendant, who has acted recklessly, but under an error, and without malice, or bad faith. On the other hand, nominal or even unsubstantial damages would be unjust to the plaintiff; and perhaps leave in some minds a doubt I am sure you do not entertain, as to the plaintiff's perfect sanity during the whole period of his life."

As soon as his lordship had ended, the foreman of the jury said their minds were quite made up long ago.

Si—lence in the court.

We find for the plaintiff, with damages three thousand pounds.

The verdict was received with some surprise by the judge, and all the lawyers except Mr. Colt, and by the people with acclamation; in the midst of which Mr. Colt announced that the plaintiff had just gained his first class at Oxford. "I wish him joy," said the judge.

CHAPTER XVII.

The verdict was a thunder-clap to Richard Hardie; he had promised Thomas to bear him blameless. The Old Turks, into which he had bought at 72, were down to 71, and that implied a loss of five thousand pounds. On the top of all this came Mr. Compton's letter neatly copied by Colls: Richard Hardie was doubly and trebly ruined.

Then in his despair and hate he determined to baffle them all, ay, and sting the hearts of some of them once more.

He would give Peggy his last shilling; write a line to Alfred, another to Julia, assuring them he had no money, and they had killed him. And with that leave them both the solemn curse of a dying father, and then kill himself.

Not to be interrupted in his plan, he temporised with Mr. Compton; wrote that, if the Receipt was really signed by his agent, of course the loss must fall on him; it was a large sum, but he would sell out and do his best, in ten days from date. With this he went and bought a pistol, and at several chemists' shops a little essential oil of almonds: his plan was to take the poison, and if it killed without pain well and good; but if it tortured him, then he would blow his brains out at once.

He soon arranged his worldly affairs, and next day gave Peggy his 500*l.*, and told her she had better keep it for fear he should be arrested. He sent her on an errand to the other part of the town: then with

his poison and the pistol before him on the table, wrote a brief but emphatic curse for his son, and Julia; and a line to Peggy to thank her for her fidelity to one so much older than herself, and to advise her to take a tobacconist's shop with his money: when he had done all this, he poured out the fragrant poison and tasted it.

Ere he could drink it, one of those quidnuncs, who are always interrupting a gentleman when he has important business on hand, came running in with all manner of small intelligence. Mr. Hardie put down the glass, and gave him short, sullen answers, in hopes he would then go away and let him proceed to business. And at last his visitor did rise and go. Mr. Hardie sat down with a sigh of relief to his fragrant beverage.

Doesn't the door open, and this bore poke in his head: "Oh, I forgot to tell you: the Old Turks are going up to-day, like a shot." And with this he slammed the door again, and was off.

At this the cup began to tremble in the resolute wretch's hand. The Old Turks going up! He poured the poison back into the phial, and put it and the pistol, and all the letters, carefully into his pocket, and took a cab to the City.

The report was true; there was an extraordinary movement in the Old Turks. The sultan was about to pay a portion of this loan, being at six per cent.; this had transpired, and at four o'clock the Turks were quoted at 73. Mr. Hardie returned a gainer of 5000*l.* instead of a loser. He locked up the means of death for the present.

And now an ordinary man would have sold out,

and got clear of the fatal trap: but this was not an ordinary man: he would not sell a share that day. In the afternoon they rose to 74. He came home, unloaded his pistol, and made himself some brandy-and-water, and with a grim smile, flavoured it with a few drops of the poison — that was a delicious tumbler. The Turks went up, up, up, to 82. Then he sold out, and cleared 49,000*l.*, and all in about ten days.

With this revived the habits of his youth; no more cheating: nothing could excuse that but the dread of poverty. He went to his appointment with Mr. Compton; asked to see the Receipt; said "Yes; that was his form, and Skinner's handwriting; he had never personally received one farthing of the money; Skinner had clearly embezzled it: but that did not matter; of course, Captain Dodd must not lose his money. Send your bill of costs in Hardie v. Hardie to *me*, Mr. Compton," said he, "they shall not be taxed: you have lost enough by me already."

There was an air of dignity and good faith about the man that imposed even on Compton. And when Mr. Hardie drew out the notes and said, "I should be grateful if you would forgive me the interest; but for a great piece of good fortune on the Stock Exchange, I could never have paid the whole principal," he said, warmly,

"The interest should never be demanded through *him*."

He called in Colls, delivered up the Receipt, and received the 14,010*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* from Mr. Hardie.

O immortal Cash! You, like your great inventor have a kind of spirit as well as a body; and on this,

not on your grosser part, depends your personal identity. So long as that survives, your body may be recalled to its lawful owner from Heaven knows where.

Mr. Compton rushed to Pembroke Street and put this hard, hard Cash in David Dodd's hands once more.

Love and Constancy had triumphed: and Julia and Alfred were to be married and go down to Albion Villa to prepare it for the whole party: tenants no more: Alfred had bought it. The Commissioners of Lunacy had protected his 20,000*l.* zealously from the first: and his trustees had now paid the money over.

Alfred, consulted by Mrs. Dodd, whose pet of pets he now was, as to the guests to be asked to the wedding breakfast, suggested "None but the tried friends of our adversity."

"What an excellent idea!" said Mrs. Dodd, naïvely.

Dr. Sampson being duly invited asked if he should bring his Emulsion.

This proposal puzzled all but Mrs. Dodd. She was found laughing heartily in a corner without any sound of laughter. Being detected and pointed out by Julia, she said, with a little crow, "He means his wife! Yes, certainly, bring your Emulcent" — pretending he had used that more elegant word — "and then they will all see how well you can behave."

Accordingly he brought a lady, who was absurdly pretty to be the mother of several grown young ladies and gentlemen, and two shades more quiet and placid than Mrs. Dodd. She quietly had her chair placed by

Dr. Sampson's, and, whenever he got racy, she put a hand gently on his shoulder, and by some mesmeric effect it moderated him as Neptune did the waves in the Æneid. She was such a mistress of this mesmeric art, that she carried on a perfect conversation with her other neighbour, yet modulated her lion lord with a touch of that composing hand, in a parenthetical manner, and while looking another way.

This hand, soft as down, yet to all appearance irresistible, suppressed the great art of healing, vital chronometry, the wrongs of inventors, the collusions of medicine, the Mad Ox, and all but drawing-room topics, at the very first symptom, and only just allowed the doctor to be the life and soul of the party.

Julia and Mrs. Dodd had a good cry at parting. Of course Alfred consoled them; reminded them it was only for a week, and carried off his lovely prize, who in the carriage soon dried her eyes upon his shoulder.

Then she applied to her new lord and master for information. "They *say* that you and me are one, now," said she.

He told her triumphantly it was so.

"Then from this moment you are Julius and I am Elfrida," said she.

"That is a bargain," said he, and sealed it on the sweet lips that were murmuring Heaven so near him.

In this sore-tried and now happy pair the ardour of possession lasted long, and was succeeded by the sober but full felicity of conjugal love and high esteem.

combined. They were so young and elastic, that past sorrows seemed but to give one zest more to the great draught of happiness they now drank day by day. They all lived together at Albion Villa, thanks to Alfred. He was by nature combative, and his warlike soul was roused at the current theory that you cannot be happy under the same roof with your wife's mother. "That is cant," said he, to Mrs. Dodd; "let us you and I trample on it hand in hand."

"My child," said poor Mrs. Dodd, sorrowfully, "everybody says a mother-in-law in the house bores a young gentleman sadly."

"If a young gentleman can't live happy with *you*, mamma," said he, kissing her, "he is a little snob, that is all, and not fit to live at all. Delenda est Cantilena! That means "Down with Cant!" They did live together: and behold eleven French plays, with their thirty-three English adaptations, confuted to the end of time.

Creatures so high-bred as Mrs. Dodd never fidget one. There is a repose about them; they are balm to all those they love, and blister to none. Item, no stranger could tell by Mrs. Dodd's manner whether Edward or Alfred was her own son.

Oh, you happy little villa! you were as like Paradise as any mortal dwelling can be. A day came, however, when your walls could no longer hold all the happy inmates. Julia presented Alfred with a lovely boy: enter nurses, and the villa showed symptoms of bursting. Two months more, and Alfred and his wife and boy overflowed into the next villa. It was but twenty yards off; and there was a double *reason for* the migration. As often happens after a

long separation, Heaven bestowed on Captain and Mrs. Dodd another infant to play about their knees at present, and help them grow younger instead of older: for tender parents begin life again with their children.

The boys were nearly of a size, though the nephew was a month or two older than his uncle, a relationship that was early impressed on their young minds, and caused those who heard their prattle many a hearty laugh.

"Mrs. Dodd," said a lady, "I couldn't tell by your manner which is yours and which is your daughter's."

"Why they are both mine," said Mrs. Dodd piteously.

As years rolled on Dr. Sampson made many converts at home and abroad. The foreign ones acknowledged their obligations. The leading London physicians managed more skilfully; they came into his ideas, and bit by bit reversed their whole practice, and, twenty years after Sampson, began to strengthen the invalid at once, instead of first prostrating him, and so causing either long sickness or sudden death. But, with all this, they disowned their forerunner, and still called him a quack while adopting his quackery. This dishonesty led them into difficulties. To hide that their whole practice in medicine was reversed on *better information*, they went from shuffle to shuffle, till at last they reached this climax of fatuity and egotism — THE TYPE OF DISEASE IS CHANGED.

Natura mutatur, non nos mutamur.

O, mutable Nature and immutable doctors!
O, unstable Omniscience, and infallible Nescience!

The former may err; the latter never — in its own opinion.

At this rate, draining the weak of their life-blood was the right thing in Cervantes's day: and, when he observed that it killed men like sheep, and said so sub tit. Sangrado, he was confounding his own age with an age to come three hundred years later, in which coming age depletion was *going* to be wrong.

Molière — in lashing the whole scholastic system of lancet, purge, and blister as one of slaughter — committed the same error: mistook his century for one to come.

And Sampson, thirty years ago, sang the same tune, and mistook his inflammatory generation for the cool generation unborn. In short, it is the characteristic of a certain blunder called genius to see things too far in advance. The surest way to avoid this is not to see them at all; but go blindly by the cant of the hour. Race moutonniere, va!

Sampson was indignant at finding that these gentry, after denouncing him for years as a quack, were pilfering his system, yet still reviling him. He went in a towering passion, and lashed them by tongue and pen: told them they were his subtractors now as well as detractors, asked them how it happened that in countries where there is no Sampson the type of disease remains unchanged, depletion is the practice, and death the result, as it was in every age?

No man, however stout, can help being deeply wounded when he sees his ideas stolen, yet their author and publisher disowned. Many men's hearts have been broken by this: but I doubt whether they were really *great* men.

Don't tell me Liliput ever really kills Brobdignag. Except of course when Brobdignag takes medical advice of Liliput.

Dr. Sampson had three shields against subtraction, detraction, and all the wrongs inventors endure; to wit, a choleric temper, a keen sense of humour, and a good wife. He storms and rages at his detracting pupils; but ends with roars of laughter at their impudence. I am told he still hopes to meet with justice some day, and to give justice a chance, he goes to bed at ten, for, says he,

> Jinny us, jinny us,
> Take care of your carease,

and explains that no genius ever lived to ninety without being appreciated.

"If Chatterton and Keats had attended to this they would have been all right. If James Watt had died at fifty he would have been all wrong; for at fifty he was a failure: so was the painter Etty, th' English Tishin." And then he accumulates examples.

His last distich bearing on Hard Cash is worth recording. "Miss Julee," said he, "y' are goen to maerry int' a strange family —

> Where th' ijjit puts the jinny us
> In-til a madhus,"

which, like most of the droll things this man said, was true: for Soft Tommy and Alfred were the two intellectual extremes of the whole tribe of Hardies.

Mrs. Archbold, disappointed both in love and revenge, reposed her understanding and soothed her mind with Frank Beverley and opium. This soon made

former deep in love with her, and his intellect by contact with hers. But one day news came from Australia that her husband was dead. Now, perhaps I shall surprise the reader if I tell him that this Archbold began her wedded life a good, confiding, loving, faithful woman. Yet so it was: the miserable blackguard she had married, he it was laboured to spoil her character, and succeeded at and drove her, unwilling at first, to other men. The news of his death was like a shower-bath; it her. She took counsel with herself, and hope in her strong head and miserable heart. She Frank, and watched him like a hawk. He fell on his knees, and implored her to marry directly. She gave him her hand and turned and shed the most womanly tear that had blessed years. "I am not mad, you know," said poor I am only a bit of a muff." To make a long she exerted all her intelligence, and with Frank took measures towards superseding commission of Lunacy. Now, in such a case, the Chancellor always examines the patient in per- What was the consequence? Instead of the old Wolf, who had been devouring him at fourth hand, Frank had two interviews with Chancellor himself: a learned, grave, upright who questioned him kindly and shrewdly; him to be a young man of small intellec- but not the least idiotic or mad, superseded commission in defiance of his greedy kinsfolk, and him his property. He married Edith Archbold, made him as happy as the day was long. For year or two she treated his adoration with

good-natured contempt; but, as years rolled on, she became more loving, and he more knowing. They are now a happy pair, and all between her first honest love, and this her last, seems to her a dream.

So you see a female rake can be ameliorated by a loving husband, as well as a male rake by a loving wife.

It sounds absurd, but that black-browed jade is like to be one of the best wives and mothers in England. But then, mind you, she had always — Brains.

I don't exactly know why Horace puts together those two epithets, "just" and "tenacious of purpose." Perhaps he had observed they go together. To be honest, I am not clear whether this is so on the grand scale. But certainly the two features did meet remarkably in one of my characters — Alfred Hardie. The day the bank broke, he had said he would pay the creditors. He now set to work to do it by degrees. He got the names and addresses, lived on half his income, and paid half away to those creditors: he even asked Julia to try and find Maxley out, and do something for him. "But don't let me see him," said he, trembling, "for I could not answer for myself." Maxley was known to be cranky, but harmless, and wandering about the country. Julia wrote to Mr. Green.

Alfred's was an uphill game; but fortune favours the obstinate as well as the bold. One day, about four years after his marriage with Julia, being in London, he found a stately figure at the corner of a street,

dignified to ask it

give the fallen
and thought of the
"Fa-

"I un-
and
now I
me of
would

and
old man with de-
day and night for the medici-
and being himself
wrapped Alfred in an agree-
and lodge him, and pay him a guinea
account in return for this Alfred was
property, and pocket the profits.
assented: the old man chuckled at his
and made him sign a formal agreement

he used to sit brooding and miserable
the week till guinea time came: and then
up a bit. One day Alfred sent for an ac-
look after his father's papers, and see if
were really desperate.

accountant was not long at work, and told
accounts were perfectly clear, and kept in
admirable order. "The cash balance is

60,000*l.*," said he: "and many of the rents are due. It is an agent you want, not an accountant."

"What are you talking about? a balance of 60,000*l.*?" Alfred was stupified.

The accountant however soon convinced him by the figures it was so.

Alfred went with the good news to his father.

His father went into a passion. "That is one side of the account ye fool," said he, "think of the rates, the taxes, the outgoings. You want to go from your bargain, and turn me on the world; but I have got you in black and white, tight, tight."

Then Alfred saw the truth, and wondered at his past obtuseness.

His father was a monomaniac.

He consulted Sampson, and Sampson told him to increase the old man's comforts on the sly, and pay him his guinea a week. "It's all you can do for him."

Then Alfred employed an agent, and received a large income from his father's land and houses, and another from his consols. The old gentleman had purchased westward of Hyde Park Square, and had bought with excellent judgment till his mind gave way. But Alfred never spent a farthing of it on himself: all he took was for his father's creditors. "All justice is good," said he, "even wild justice." Some of these unhappy creditors he found in the workhouse; the Misses Lunley that survived were there, alas! He paid them their four thousand pounds, and restored them to society. The name of Hardie began to rise again from the dust.

Now, while Richard Hardie sat brooding and miserable, expecting utter ruin, and only brightening

up on guinea day, Julia had a protégé with equally false views, but more cheerful ones. It was an old man with a silver beard, and a machine with which he stamped leather into round pieces of silver, in his opinion. Nothing could have shaken that notion out of his mind. Julia confirmed it. She let it be known that she would always cash five pieces of round leather from Mr. Matthews' mint per day, and ten on Friday, when working men are poorest.

She contrived this with diabolical, no, angelical cunning, to save the old man from ridicule, and to do his soul much good. All souls were dear to her. What was the consequence? He went about with his mint, and relieved poor people, and gratified his mania at the same time. His face began to beam with benevolence, and innocent self-satisfaction. On Richard Hardie's all was cordage: and deep gloom sat on his ever-knitted brow.

Of these two men which was the rich man; he who had nothing, yet thought he possessed enough for himself and his neighbours: or he who rolled in wealth, and writhed under imaginary poverty?

One reflection more. Do not look to see Providence dash the cup of prosperity from every dishonest hand; or you will often be disappointed: yet this, if you look closer, you shall often see; such a man holds the glittering cup tight, and nectar to the brim; but into that cup a shadowy hand squeezes some subtle ingredient, which turns that nectar to wormwood.

Richard Hardie died, his end being hastened by fear of poverty coming like an armed man, and his guinea a week going. Matthews met with an accident, and being impervious to pain, but subject to death,

was laid beside his poor mistress in St. Anne's churchyard. Julia buried him, and had a headstone put to his grave; and, when this was done, she took her husband to see it. On that stone was fresh carved the true name of the deceased, James Maxley.

"I have done what you told me," said Julia, solemnly.

"I know it," said Alfred, softly. "I saw who your Matthews was; but I could not speak of him, even to you. You have done right my good Christian wife. I wish I was like you. My poor little Jenny!"

Richard Hardie's papers were all in order; and among them an old will leaving 14,000*l.* to Edward Dodd.

On this being announced to Edward, he remarked that it was a fraud. Alfred had been at him for a long time with offers of money, and failing these had lost his temper and forged a will, in his, Edward's, favour.

This scandalous defence broke down. The document was indisputable, and the magic sum was forced down Master Edward's throat, nilly willy. Thus rose the Hard Cash once more from the grave.

All this enabled the tenacious Alfred to carry out a deeply-cherished design. Hardie's late bank had been made into a shop; but it belonged to Mrs. Dodd; he bought it of her, and set up the bank again, with Edward as managing partner. This just suited Edward, who sadly wanted employment. Hardie and Co. rose again, and soon wiped out the late disgraceful episode, and hooked on to the past centuries of honour and good credit. No creditor of Richard Hardie was left unpaid. Alfred went in for politics; stood for

Barkington, was defeated by seventeen: took it as a matter of course; told his friends he had never succeeded in anything at first; nor been beaten in the end; stood again, and became M.P. for Barkington, whence to dislodge him I pity any one who tries.

For a long time Mrs. Dodd was nervous, and used to wake with a start at night, and put out her hand to make sure David was not lost again: but this wore off.

For years the anniversary of that fatal day, when he was brought home on the stretcher, came back to them all as a day of gloom: but that wore off.

Sometimes the happiness of her family seemed incredible to her, remembering what they had all gone through. At first, their troubles were too terrible and recent to be discussed. But even that wore off, and they could talk of it all; and things bitter at the time became pleasant to remember.

One midsummer day they had all dined together rather early at Albion Villa, and sat on the lawn with Mrs. Dodd's boy and Julia's boy and girl playing about these ladies' knees. Now after a little silence, Mrs. Dodd, who had been thinking quietly of many things, spoke to them all, and said: "If my children and I had not been bosom-friends, we never should have survived that terrible time we have passed through, my dears. Make friends of your children, my child."

"Ah, that I will!" said Julia; and caught up the nearest brat, and kissed it.

"It wasn't only being friends, mamma," said Edward; "it was our sticking together so."

In looking back on the story now ended, I incline to the same conclusion. Almost my first word was that

Mrs. Dodd and her children were bosom-friends; and my last is to congratulate them that it was so. Think of their various trials and temptations, and imagine what would have become of them if family love and unity had not abounded. Their little house was built on the sure foundation of true family affection: and so the winds of adversity descended, and the floods came, and burst upon that house, but could not prevail against it; it was founded on a rock.

THE END OF HARD CASH.

APPENDIX.

Private Asylums.

To the Editor of the Daily News.

Sir,

When a writer of sensation romances makes a heroine push a superfluous husband into a well, or set a house on fire in order to get rid of disagreeable testimony, we smile over the highly-seasoned dish, but do not think it necessary to apply the warning to ourselves, and for the future avoid sitting on the edge of a draw-well, or having any but fire-proof libraries. But when we read, as in the novel "Very Hard Cash," now publishing in *All the Year Round*, that any man may, at any moment, be consigned to a fate which to a sane man would be worse than death, and that not by the single act of any of our Lady Audleys, or other interesting criminals, but as part of a regular organized system, in all compliance with the laws of the land — when we read this, a thrill of terror goes through the public mind. If what Mr. Charles Reade says be possible, who is safe?

Allow me, as one thoroughly conversant with the working of the law of lunacy, to reassure the minds of your readers by informing them that it is not possible. So many are the checks and securities with which the legislature has most properly surrounded the person of an alleged lunatic; so vigilant, patient, and so zealous in the discharge of their duties are the Commissioners in Lunacy and the officially-appointed visitors of asylums, that any one (not a sensation writer) imagining

that these checks and securities could be evaded, these visitors hoodwinked in the way the author describes, would himself be a fit subject for a commission "de lunatico inquirendo."

So far from commissioners and visitors being put off with any "formula," such as the author quotes, and believing anybody rather than the patient himself, the exact contrary is the fact, and very properly so.

In my own case Earl Nelson, Viscount Folkestone, General Buckley, M.P., the Rev. Charles Grove, and Mr. Martin Coates, and in other asylums magistrates of equal intelligence and high standing, fill the office of visitors; and never in any case do they refuse a private interview to any patient asking it. In these interviews no interference of any doctors or attendants, or any "formula," is possible, and the visitors will listen even to the most incoherent ravings if there appears to be the slightest clue to be gathered from them to any real grievance.

I say nothing of the terrible slander cast upon a body of professional men to which I am proud to belong. There is no redress for that. There are certain offences with which no court of law can deal; offences against decency, good taste, and truth, which can be brought before no tribunal but that of public opinion.

I would only challenge Mr. Reade, in conclusion, if he has the slightest grounds for any belief in the possibility of the incidents he has put in print, to state those grounds. Let him quote his case, and openly and fearlessly declare when and where such atrocities occurred. I do not ask for one in all points resembling that which he has published; but one that furnishes even the slightest excuse for such a libellous attack upon those medical men who, like myself, practise in lunacy.

I am, &c.,

J. S. Bushnan, M.D.

Laverstock House Asylum, Salisbury.

Private Asylums.

To the Editor of the Daily News.

Sir,

My attention is drawn to a letter written to you by J. S. Bushnan, M. D., to vent a little natural irritation on the author of "Very Hard Cash," and lull the public back into the false security from which that work is calculated to rouse them.

I pass by his personalities in silence; but, when he tells you, in the roundabout style of his tribe, that "Very Hard Cash" rests on no basis of fact; that sane persons cannot possibly be incarcerated or detained under our Lunacy Acts; that the gentlemen who pay an asylum four flying visits a year know all that passes in it the odd 361 days, and are never outwitted and humbugged on the spot; that no interference of doctors or attendants between visitor and patient, and no formulæ of cant and deception, are possible within the walls of a madhouse — this is to play too hard upon the credulity of the public and the forgetfulness of the press. I beg to contradict all and every one of his *general* statements, more courteously, I trust, than he has contradicted me, but quite as seriously and positively.

Dr. Bushnan knows neither the subject he is writing of, nor the man he is writing at. In matters of lunacy I am not only a novelist; I am also that humble citizen who not long ago, with the aid of the press, protected a sane man who had been falsely imprisoned in a private lunatic asylum; hindered his recapture, showed him his legal remedy, fed, clothed, and kept him for twelve months with the aid of one true-hearted friend, during all which time a great functionary, though paid many thousands a year to do what I was doing at my own

expense — justice — did all he could to defeat justice, and break the poor suitor's back and perpetuate his stigma, by tyrannically postponing, and postponing, and postponing, and postponing his trial, to please the defendant. At last this great procrastinator retired, and so that worst enemy of justice, "the postponement swindle," died, and by its death trial by jury rose again from the dead, even for an alleged lunatic. Well, sir, no sooner did we get him before thirteen honest men in the light of day, than this youth — whom the mad doctors had declared and still declared insane, whom two homuncules, commissioners in lunacy, had twice visited in the asylum, and conversed with, and done nothing whatever towards his liberation — stood up eight hours in the witness-box, was examined, cross-examined, badgered; yet calm, self-possessed, and so manifestly sane, that the defendant resigned the contest, and compounded the inevitable damages, giving us a verdict, the costs, 50*l.* cash, and an annuity of 100*l.* a year. All this, says Dr. Bushnan, is impossible.

I closely examined this youth as to his fellow-patients, and, as he could minutely describe the illusions of the insane ones, I find it hard to doubt his positive statement that two patients in that same house were perfectly sane.

Of course the main event I have related made some noise; real and alleged lunatics heard there was a Quixotic ass in this island who would, in his ungarded moments, give away justice at his own expense, instead of selling it for so many thousands a year and not delivering the article; and I was inundated with letters and petitions, and opened a vein of private research by which the readers of "Hard Cash" will profit, all except Dr. Bushnan. A lady called on me and asked me to get her sister out of a private asylum, assuring me she was sane, and giving me proofs. Having observed that to get out of an asylum you must first be out of it, I cudgelled my brains, and split this prisoner in half; I drew up a little document authorising a certain sharp attorney to proceed in law or equity for her relief; and sent her sister into the

asylum to get it signed by the prisoner. She did sign it, and, thus armed, her other self the attorney, being outside the asylum, was listened to, though a deaf ear had always been turned to her. After a correspondence, which has served me as a model in the current number of "Hard Cash," after in vain suggesting her discharge to the parties pecuniarily interested in detaining her, the board actually plucked up courage and discharged her themselves. We all saw her often after this, and were hours in her company. She was perfectly sane, as sane as I am, and much saner than some of the mad doctors are at this hour, as time will show. This case opened another vein of research, and my detective staff was swelled by a respectable ex-attendant (female), who gave me the names of two or three sane ladies at that time in durance vilest to her knowlege.

Three years after the supposed date of Alfred Hardie's impossible incarceration came the flagrant case of "Mathew *v.* Harty," some of whose delicious incidents have been used in "Hard Cash," and will be contradicted by humbugs and condemned as improbable by gulls; at least I venture to hope so. The defendant was one of that immaculate class, to criticise some of whom, if I understand Dr. Bushnan aright, is to libel the whole body; and the plaintiff was a distinguished young scholar in Dublin. Defendant enticed him into a madhouse and there left him in a common flagged cell; but to amuse his irrational mind, lent him — what? Peter Parley? or Dr. Littlewit's conjectures about the intellect of Hamlet? Oh dear no; "Stack's Optics," "Lloyd's Mechanical Philosophy," "Brinkley's Astronomy," "Cicero de Officiis," and "Stock's Lucian."

Enter the official inspector; is appealed to, admits his sanity, promises to liberate him, and with that promise dismisses the matter from his official mind, and goes his way contented. This was sworn to afterwards, and not contradicted. Then comes Dr. Harty and urges him to confession in these memorable words, sworn to and not contradicted: — "Your safety will consist in acknowledging you are insane;

and your sanity will appear by admitting your insanity." Mathew saw the hook, and declined the bait. Now there was in this asylum a boy called Hoolahan, whose young mind had not been poisoned, and whose naked eye was as yet undimmed by the spectacles of cant and prejudice. So he saw at a glance Mathew was sane, and, not being paid a thousand a year to pity him — pitied him. Hoolahan took a letter to Mathew's college chum. In that letter Mathew poured out his wrongs and his distress. But suppose it should be intercepted! Mathew provided against this contingency; he couched his letter in Ciceronian Latin, humbly conceiving that this language would puzzle the doctors as much as the Latin in their prescriptions would puzzle Cicero. Mr. Hall got the letter, and, not being paid to protect alleged lunatics, took the matter up in earnest, and so frightened Dr. Harty that he discharged Mathew at once; and said, "Now don't you be induced to bother me about this trifle; I'm an old man, and going to die almost immediately." On this Mathew took the alarm, and served a writ on him without loss of time. The cause came on, and was urged and defended with equal forensic ability. But evidence decides cases, and the plaintiff's evidence was overpowering. Then the defendant, despairing of a verdict, bethought him how he might lower the inevitable damages: he instructed his counsel to reveal that "the young man who was now prosecuting him to the death was his own illegitimate son." At this revelation, ably and feelingly introduced by Counsellor Martly, the sensation was, of course, immense, and, being in Ireland, a gallery came down just then and the *coup de théâtre* was perfect. Many tears were shed; the public was moved; the plaintiff still more so. For it is not often that a man, who has passed for an orphan all his life, can plant a writ and reap a parent. "Japhet in search of a Father" should have wandered about serving writs. The jury either saw that the relationship was irrelevant in a question so broad and civic, or else they were fathers of another stamp, and disapproved of tender parents who disown their offspring for 24 years, and then lock them up for mad,

and only claim kindred in court to mitigate damages. At all events they found for Mr. Mathew, with damages one thousand pounds. All this, says Dr. Bushnan, was utterly impossible. Well, the impossibility in question disguised itself as fact, and went through the hollow form of taking place, upon the 11th, 12th, and 13th December, 1851, and the myth is recorded in the journals, and the authorised report by Elrington, jun., and W. P. Carr, barristers-at-law, is published in what may be an air-bubble, but looks like a pamphlet, by M'Glashan, 50, Upper Sackville Street, Dublin. But I rely mainly on the private cases, which a large correspondence with strangers, and searching inquiry amongst my acquaintances, have revealed to me; unfortunately these are nearly always accompanied with a stipulation of secrecy; so terrible, so ineradicable, is the stigma. "Hall v. Semple" clearly adds its mite of proof that certificates of insanity are still given recklessly; but to show you how strong I am, I do not rely at all on disputable cases like Nottidge, Ruck, and Leech; though in the two latter of these cases the press leaned strongly against the insanity of the prisoners, and surely the press is less open to prejudice in this matter than Dr. Bushnan is, who dates his confident conjectures from a madhouse. It seems I have related in "Hard Cash" that in one asylum (not Dr. Wycherley's), when Alfred Hardie went to complain to a visitor, a keeper interfered and said, "Take care, sir, he is dangerous." And this I then and there call a formula, one out of many. "Dreamer," says Dr. Bushnan; "there are no such things as formulæ in madhouses: and no interference between patient and inspector is possible, for there are none in my asylum, and therefore there can be none in any other." Oh, logic of psychologicals!

Mr. Drummond, in a debate on lunacy, testified as follows: — "Now the honourable gentleman had remarked that it was very easy for persons in those establishments who had a complaint to make, to make it. Was it really so? (Hear, hear.) He thought otherwise. He could only say that, whenever he had visited an asylum, and went up to a lunatic who had

stated that he had a ground of complaint, some keeper immediately evinced an unusual interest in his personal welfare, and cautioned him, saying, 'Take care, sir, he is a very dangerous man.' (Hear.)"

The length of this letter, which after all but skims the matter, arises out of the importance of the subject, and the nature of all argument based on evidence. It takes but a few lines to make many bold assertions, and to challenge Mr. Reade to prove them false. But the Readian proofs cannot be so compressed. "Plus negabit in unâ horâ unus doctor, quam centum docti in centum annis probaverint." I conclude by begging you to find space for the following extract from a respectable journal. I have many such extracts in my London house: this one is a fair representative of the press, and of its convictions and expressions at the time when it issued. Extract. — "Here are two cases [Mrs. Turner and Mr. Leech]: We have before us the particulars of a third, but we are not, unfortunately, in a condition to publish the names. Suffice it to say that an unfortunate gentleman who had been suffering from bodily disorder which finally affected his brain, but who was not mad, was incarcerated in one of those horrid dens which are called private lunatic asylums; and there confined for months. By his own account he was treated with the greatest cruelty, strapped down to a bed with broad bands of webbing, and kept there till it was supposed he was dying. The result we will state in the sufferer's own words: — 'My back, from lying in one constrained posture, was a mass of ulcerated and sloughing sores; my right hand was swollen enormously, and useless; and two fingers of the left hand were permanently contracted, and the joints destroyed. I also lost several front teeth.' This poor man at last obtained his liberty, and applied to the commissioners for redress. Their letter in reply is now before us. The commissioners merely say that, although they do not in any degree impugn the integrity of the complainant's statements, they are not of opinion that inquiry would answer any good purpose. They add, however, that, 'in order to mark their opinion on the

subject they have granted Mr. —— a licence provisionally for the limited period of four months only, and that the renewal will depend upon the condition and management of his establishment being entirely satisfactory in the meantime.' [As if any great criminal would not undertake to behave better or more cautiously if, after detecting him by a miracle, we were weak enough to bribe him to more skilful hypocrisy by the promise of impunity. C. B.] Poor consolation this for all the misery the wretched sufferer had undergone! Here, then, are three cases following one upon the other in rapid succession. How many remain behind of which we know nothing? The fact would appear to be that under existing arrangements any English man or woman may without much difficulty be incarcerated in a private lunatic asylum when not deprived of reason. If actually deprived of reason when first confined, patients may be retained in duress when their cure is perfected, and they ought to be released."

"I am, &c.,

"THE AUTHOR OF 'VERY HARD CASH.'

"Magdalen College, Oxford, Oct. 23, 1863."

To this letter I hear Dr. Bushnan has replied *down in the country*. By this and by his not sending me a copy may I not infer he prefers having it all his own way in the neighbourhood of his asylum to encountering me again before the nation?

The extract quoted above is, I believe, from the 'Times,' and was accompanied by an admirable letter of three columns thus entitled —

LUNATIC ASYLUMS AND THE LUNACY LAWS.

(By a Physician.)

This honest inquirers should read, and also the newspaper reports of false imprisonment and cruelty, during the last

twelve years, and the contemporaneous comments of the press — before deciding to overrate my imaginative powers, and underrate my sincerity, and my patient, laborious industry.

NOTICE.

I request all those persons in various ranks of life, — who by letter or *vivâ voce* have during the last five years told me of sane persons incarcerated or detained in private asylums, and of other abuses — to communicate with me by letter. I also invite fresh communications: and desire it to be known that this great question did not begin with me in the pages of a novel; neither shall it end there: for, where Justice and Humanity are both concerned, there —

Dict sans faict
A Dieu deplait.

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